

# RUSKIN · RELICS





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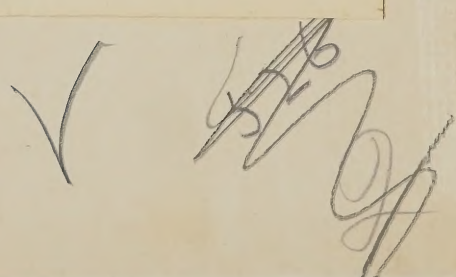
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# RUSKIN RELICS





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# RUSKIN RELICS

BY

W. G. COLLINGWOOD

AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF JOHN RUSKIN," ETC.

WITH FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS BY

JOHN RUSKIN AND OTHERS



LONDON

ISBISTER & COMPANY LIMITED

15 & 16 TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN

1903

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.  
London & Edinburgh



*Twelve chapters are here reprinted, with some additions, from "Good Words," by the courtesy of the Editor and Publishers. Another, on Ruskin's Drawings, is adapted, by permission, from the author's "Prefatory Notes to the Catalogue of the Ruskin Exhibition at the Gallery of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours" in 1901. The first chapter is newly written for this book.*

*W. G. C.*

*Coniston, September 1903*



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I

RUSKIN'S CHAIR



## RUSKIN'S CHAIR

"THIS is all very well," said a visitor, after looking over the sketches and books of the Ruskin Museum at Coniston, "but what the public would prefer is to see the chair he sat in." Something tangible, that brings before us the person, rather than his work, is what we all like; for though successful workers are continually asking us to judge them by what they have done, we know there is more. We want to see their portraits; their faces will tell us—better than their books—whether we can trust them. We want to know their lives by signs and tokens unconsciously left, before we fall down and worship them for what, after all, may be only a lucky accident of success. They cry out indignantly that this should not be; but so it is.

Relics of heroes even the ancient Romans treasured. Relics of saints our forefathers would fight for and die for. Relics of those who in modern times have made our lives better and brighter we need not be ashamed of preserving. And among relics I count all the little incidents, the by-play of life, the anecdotes which betray character, so long as they are truly told and "lovingly," as George Richmond said about his portrait of Ruskin. "Have not you flattered him?" asked the severe parents. "No; it is only the truth lovingly told."

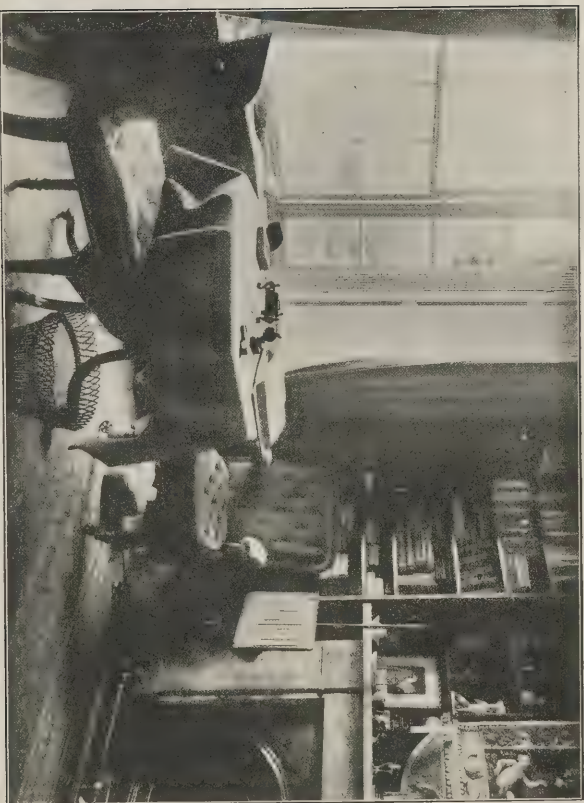
In his study you see two chairs; one, half-drawn from the table, with pen and ink laid out before it, where he used to sit

at his writing ; the light from the bay window coming broadly in at his left hand, and the hills, when he lifted his eyes, for his help. The other, by the fireside, was the arm chair into which he migrated for those last ten years of patience, no longer with his own books but others' books before him. Then, turning to the chapter on his Music, you can see the chair by the drawing-room table, in which, making a pulpit of it, he preached his baby sermon—"People, be dood !"

But it is about another kind of chair that I have more to say in this first chapter, if you will forgive the pun ; the metaphorical chair which professors are supposed to fill at the University. Ruskin's was nominally that of Fine Art, but he was really a sort of teaching Teufelsdröckh, Professor of Things in General. His chair stood on four legs, or even more, like some antique settles of carved oak ; very unlike the Swiss milking-stool of the modern specialist. Not that it stood more firmly ; good business-folk, whose sons fell under his influence, and dons with an eye to college successes in the schools, thought his teaching deplorable ; and from their point of view much was to be said. It cannot be denied, also, that like the born teacher he was, he sometimes tried to make silk purses out of sows' ears.

He taught none of us to paint saleable pictures nor to write popular books. A pupil once asked him outright to do so. "I hope you're not serious," he replied. To learn the artist's trade he definitely advised going to the Royal Academy schools ; his drawing school at Oxford was meant for an almost opposite purpose—to show the average amateur that really Fine Art is a worshipful thing, far beyond him ; to be appreciated (and that alone is worth while) after a course of training, but never to be attained unless by birth-gift.

At the start this school, provided by the Professor at his own cost of time, trouble and money, was well attended ; in the second year there were rarely more than three pupils. It was in 1872 that I joined it, having seen him before, introduced



*(Miss Briebill, photographer)*

RUSKINS STUDY AT BRANTWOOD





by Mr. Alfred W. Hunt, R.W.S., the landscape painter. Ruskin asked to see what I had been doing, and I showed him a niggled and panoramic bit of lake-scenery. "Yes, you have been looking at Hunt and Inchbold." I hoped I had been looking at Nature. "You must learn to draw." Dear me! thought I, and I have been exhibiting landscapes. "And you try to put in more than you can manage." Well, I supposed he would have given me a good word for that!

So he set me to facsimile what seemed like a tangle of scabbles in charcoal, and I bungled it. Whereupon I had to do it again, and was a most miserable undergraduate. But the nice thing about him was that he did not say, "Go away; you are no good;" but set me something drier and harder still. I had not the least idea what it was all coming to; though there was the satisfaction of looking through the sliding cases between whiles at "Liber Studiorum" plates—rather ugly, some of them, I whispered to myself—and little scraps of Holbein and Burne-Jones, quite delicious, for I had the pre-Raphaelite measles badly just then, in reaction from the water-colour landscape in which I had been brought up. Only I was too ignorant to see, till he showed me, that the virtue of real pre-Raphaelite draughtsmanship was in faithfulness to natural form, and resulting sensitiveness to harmony of line; nothing to do with sham mediævalism and hard contours.

By-and-by he promoted me to Burne-Jones's "Psyche received into Heaven." What rapture at the start, and what trials before that facsimile was completed! And when all was done, "That's not the way to draw a foot," said a popular artist who saw the copy. But that was the way to use the pure line, and who but Ruskin taught it at the time?

Later, he set painful tasks of morsels from Turner, distasteful at first, but gradually fascinating; for he would not let one off before getting at the bottom of the affair, whether it was merely a knock-in of the balanced colour-masses or the absolute imitation of the little wavy clouds, an eighth of an

inch long, left apparently ragged by the mezzotinter's scraper. All this does not make a professional picture-painter, but such teaching must have opened many pupils' eyes to certain points in art not universally perceived.

That was one leg of the chair ; another was the literary leg. He contemplated his "Bibliotheca Pastorum," anticipating in a different form the best hundred books, only there were to be far less. The first, as suited in his mind for country readers on St. George's farms, was the "Economist" of Xenophon, and two of his undergraduate friends undertook the translation. Of these, Wedderburn of Balliol, now K.C., and Ruskin's literary executor, was one ; and the other was Montefiore of Balliol, who was already in weak health (he did not live long after those days) and passed on his share in the work to me. That was the beginning of many interesting afternoons in Ruskin's rooms, where I read my bit of translation to him, and he compared it with the Greek, revising and Ruskinising the schoolboy exercise. His method of translation was quite new to me. The Greek was not to be so turned into English as to lose its Greek flavour ; one should know it for a rendering out of a foreign tongue. The same word in Greek was to be represented by the same word in English. He would have no more "freedom" in this than in anything else. But he came down heavily on all the catchwords and commonplaces dear to Bohn's cribs, and for a phrase like "to boot" had no mercy. On the other hand, he invented quaint renderings of his own, such as "courtesy" for *philanthropia*. The book is still in print for the curious to read ; he gave his translators the profits : "It will keep you in raspberry jam," he said, and I have had a postal order for my share regularly these nearly thirty years. But the lesson one learns at school in Latin, how to make mosaic of words and decorative patterns of phrases, no master ever tried to teach me in English, as Ruskin taught it over the tea-cups in those afternoons at Corpus.

There was a third leg to the chair, which we might call the

dignity of labour. When his first group of men would not draw, he made them dig at Hinksey. I was slack at the Hinksey diggings, but he made me dig at Coniston. When the Xenophon was nearly ready, the translators were asked to Brantwood in the summer of 1875 to finish it. At my earliest visit, two years before, he had no harbour; the boats were exposed to the big waves from the south-west storms, and it was an almost daily task for the gardeners to keep them aground on the shore and to bale them. In '74 he began some harbour-works, which we were set to complete. We dug and built every afternoon, and enjoyed it, though we had not time to finish the job. After us the local mason was called in, so that the harbour you now see is professional work. But he bade them leave three of my steps standing as a monument of that summer's doings, and there they are to this day.

It seemed a kind of joke to make Oxford men dig, and I think the Hinksey work was devised partly in despair of otherwise holding his class together. But he had reasons for accustoming them to the labour by which far the greater part of humanity has to live. Not to make them into navvies, but to give them a respect for the skilled use of a pick and a trowel, was his intention; just as the drawing school was not to make them artists, but to show them how hard it was. In his own undergraduate days the yokel and the mob were outside the pale of the gownsman's interests. There was condescending charity, of course, and comradeship in sport with the keeper and the groom; but "your real gentleman," said Byron, "never perspires." On the contrary, said Ruskin, when Adam delved, in the sweat of his brow, life was nearest to Eden-gates. "To draw hard breath over ploughshare and spade" was the glory of living. And so, to make these youngsters dig was an object-lesson in ethics, the first rudiments of human fellowship, which branched upward into all the moralities.

A fourth leg to his chair was nature study. In those days "science" was supposed to be the only true natural history:

Gilbert White was out of date. Ruskin's teaching was a protest, and it has prevailed.

From any master we learn no more than we are capable of learning, and he never gave me many of the tasks he put upon others of his pupils. Less for any use he made of it, but always with the suggestion that it was for a practical end, he set me to draw glaciers and glaciated rocks at Chamouni ; on the Coniston fells demonstrated his method of taking dip and strike from any bit of rock showing cleavage and stratification, and on his own piece of moor made me survey and elaborate a model to scale. It was treated as a form of sport, enjoyable as any game ; but not to be scamped. There was always the insistence on accuracy above all things, and fulness of observation, with care about trifles which I had not dreamed of before, and never expected from him. It was only much later that I understood, from his note-books and sketch-books, what an immense amount of dry, hard work underlay the easy eloquence of his paragraphs. For instance, "Love's Meinie" seems to be a slight performance ; but to serve for it he had a vast collection of unstuffed bird-skins, and to get at the secret of flight planned and commissioned from a skilled artificer sets of quill-feathers, enormously magnified, in exact imitation of the true forms and proportions in the bird's wing. One of these is on view in the Coniston museum, which holds so many of his relics ; a complete set are still at Brantwood. To show the village children how the wheels of heaven go round, and how the stars have been grouped into pictures of the world-old myths of nature, he planned a revolving globe into which you could climb and see a blue sky pierced for the greater and the lesser lights, and painted with the constellation figures. The globe has perished, but the object-lesson in education remains.

I have mentioned four lines of his teaching, four legs to his chair. Other traits of his many-sided mind are given in the following chapters, and even these are not exhaustive. They will serve to show him as he was seen at close quarters, not

merely through the medium of print—the last of the sages, lingering into an era of specialists. I do not rate him as an infallible authority, neither in taste, nor in ethics, nor in anything. But he was a great teacher, because he took you by the hand as he went on his voyage of discovery through the world; he made you see what he saw, and taught you to look for yourself.

One thing he never taught me was to keep a diary. He used to lament how many beautiful sunsets he had not sketched, and how many interesting facts he had lost for want of the scratch of a pencil. In trying to recall these bygones one begins to perceive their loss: so little one can save from the wreckage of time. Once, when his talk was rather confidential, I said, "Never mind, I'm not Boswell taking notes." "I think," he replied, "you might do worse."



II

RUSKIN'S "JUMP"





## II

### RUSKIN'S "JUMP"

"JUMP" was the Brantwood vernacular for "Jumping Jenny"; and she was Ruskin's own private, particular "water sulky," as the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table put it. There is hardly any need to say that she was named after the famous though somewhat disreputable brig, commanded and partly owned by the late Anthony Ewart, not unknown to readers of Ruskin's favourite novel "Redgauntlet." I do not mean to commit myself to any statement of literary criticism in calling "Redgauntlet" his favourite novel, or to imply that he thought it the best book ever written: but it was one which he continually quoted in conversation and discussed with pleasure in his autobiography. Of all the novels he read in those evenings of "auld lang syne," when he pulled the four candles close to him at the drawing-room table, and we sketched furtively in corners, Laurence Hilliard and I, and the ladies plied their needles—no novel was read with more delight and effect. It was a pretty way of passing the evening, but not so easy to imitate unless you have a Ruskin to read to you. He had a trick of suggesting the dramatic variety of the conversations without trying to be stagey, and a skill in "cutting" the long paragraphs of Scott's descriptions which made it all as good as a play. He did not make you hot and ready to scream, as many readers do in their anxiety to act the scene.

Ruskin was no sailor, and never went for a real voyage;

but he was very fond of boats and shipping, and all that came from the sea. One of his grandfathers had been a sailor. As far as I can make out, this grandfather was an East-coast skipper of small craft, very much like one of the captains of "Many Cargoes" and "Sea Urchins." He had passed out of this world before John Ruskin came into it, and the little genius never had the luck to hear sea-stories and to learn the mysteries of reef-knots and clove-hitch from an old captain grandfather. It would have been so good for him! But one must not forget that in the making of John Ruskin there was a quarter of the blood of a seafarer. It is a rather curious fact, also, and one which has not, I believe, been mentioned in print, that the earliest Ruskin of all was a sea captain. Mr. W. Hutton Brayshay tells me that he has found in the Record Office a notice of the name in the fourteenth century; this mediæval Ruskin was captain of one of Edward III.'s ships. We cannot connect him with John Ruskin's family, any more than we can connect the Ruskins of Dalton-in-Furness in the sixteenth century; but this identity of name suggests that they may have been ancestors. It is a problem which can only be solved by research, but it should be possible, if one had time and money to work out the pedigree from wills and registers.

Turner was his real teacher in seafaring matters, giving him, if nothing more, a true interest in the look of waves and ships. It was for Turner's sake that he wrote the fine essay on "the boat in art and poetry" which forms the introduction to "Harbours of England"; and this glorification of the coast fishing-craft and the old ship of the line was not merely a literary man's concoction, but the outcome of much study and sketching at Deal, where he spent the summer of 1855 to steep himself in the subject. In the early sixties, again, he stayed for some time at Boulogne in lodgings under the sandhills north of the pier, and made friends with a French pilot and mackerel fisher who, after due apprenticeship, actually promoted him to the tiller—an honour of which he was really

prouder than that election to the membership of a foreign Academy which he forgot to answer until it was too late to say any more about it.

So when he came to Coniston, and had his own house on his own lake, he could not be without boats. There was a



*(Sutcliffe, photographer, Whitby)*

BRANTWOOD HARBOUR IN THE SEVENTIES

landing-place on the shore beneath Brantwood, shown in our photograph as it was in the earlier stages of its development, with Mrs. Arthur Severn and Miss Constance Hilliard (Mrs. W. H. Churchill) on the first primitive breakwater, and Mr. Severn's sailboat in the distance. Ruskin did not care for lake-sailing; a busy man hardly has time to wait for the moving of the water; and he got one of the indigenous tubs

for the diversion of rowing. He did not fish, and he had the greatest scorn for rowing as it is done at Oxford. "That's not rowing; that's galley-slaves' work!" he used to tell us. "To bend to the stroke, and time your oars to the beat of the waves," was his ideal: he liked going out when there was a little sea on, and white horses; and he would paddle away



*(Herbert Severn, Esq., photographer)*

CONISTON HALL AND BOATHOUSE

before the wind with great enjoyment. But when there is a little sea on, at Coniston, it means a good deal of wind; though the waves are not very high they gather a fair amount of force in their four or five miles' career up the long waterway; and the fun of riding with them is quite different from the struggle of getting your boat home again. Now Ruskin was a very practical man in some things. "When you have too much to do, don't do it," he used to say. So after a wild water-gallop, he simply landed and walked home. When the wind changed



*(From a Sketch by W. G. Collingwood)*

RUSKIN'S "JUMP" ADRIFT OFF BRANTWOOD





he could bring back his boat. There was no use in making a pain of a pleasure.

The Lake district rowing-boat is built for the Lake fisherman, and it is as neatly adapted to its purpose as the Windermere yacht which, for the peculiar winds and waters of the place, is pretty nearly perfect. The fishers used to have two chief requirements, whether they netted or trolled; the boat must travel easily in lumpy but not violent water, for the men had far to go in reaching their "drawing-up spots," and in taking their fish to market of an evening; and it must carry a good deal of tackle. In netting, there were always two partners, and so two thwarts and two pairs of sculls were used; in trolling, one went out alone, but there were rods and lines which needed space for convenient stowage. Consequently the boats were rather long, and rather low in the water; the sculls were fixed on pins, so that you could drop them when you got a bite, or landed hastily to take the hair-rope at your end of the net in drawing up. Feathering the oar was quite unknown; great speed unnecessary; great stability desirable; but not what a sailor would call seaworthiness. On the whole, for pleasure-boating on the lakes, these boats are safe and convenient; accidents are extremely rare, though hundreds and perhaps thousands of hopelessly unskilled people every summer try their hands at rowing, and do everything you ought not to do in a boat. It is impossible to insist on an experienced boatman going out with every party, and not always possible to prevent overcrowding. Local authorities have no powers, except to hang life-buoys (at their own personal expense) on convenient points along the shore. You will see one of the Coniston parish council's buoys on the boathouse in our photograph of the Hall: but you will be glad to know that it has hung there for years without being wanted for a rescue.

After some seasons' trial of the local boat, Ruskin thought he could improve upon it for his own purpose. He wanted something less cumbrous and more seaworthy, and he was

always trying experiments, uprooting notions to find how they grew, planting them upside down to see what happened,



*(Hargreaves, photographer)*

THE RUSKIN MUSEUM, CONISTON

grafting one idea upon another, to the bewilderment of onlookers. In the matter of boats he had a very willing and capable helper in Laurence Hilliard, who was the cleverest and neatest-fingered boy that ever rigged a model; and many

were the models he designed and finished with exquisite perfection of detail in the outhouse-workshop at Brantwood. Laurie, as every one called him, was deep in Scott Russell at that time, working away on the ponderous (and now discredited) folio as if he were getting it up for an examination, and covering sheets of cartridge-paper with sections and calculations. He was only too pleased to have a hand in a real job, and turned out the drawings and the model for the new boat in workman-like fashion. This was in 1879 or 1880.

Just opposite Brantwood, across the lake, is the old Coniston Hall, built in the fifteenth century as the home of the Flemings of Coniston, but nearly two hundred years ago abandoned and left to ruin. Mrs. Radcliffe, who wrote the "*Mysteries of Udolpho*"—known to most readers nowadays less for itself than as the book that so excited the heroine of "*Northanger Abbey*"—about 1794 came to Coniston, and mistook the old Coniston Hall for Conishead Priory, as it seems : and with an odd fallacy of romance described the "solemn vesper that once swelled along the lake from those consecrated walls, and awakened, perhaps, the enthusiasm of the voyager, while evening stole upon the scene." But she was right enough in being charmed with the spot, as Ruskin was in his boyish visits, long before he dreamed of living—and dying—in view of the old round chimneys among the trees, with the ripple of lake below and the peak of the Old Man rising above. Early in the nineteenth century the ruins were fitted up as a farm, and, somewhat later, the boathouse close by came to be the workshop of the man who built Ruskin's "Jump."

Mr. William Bell was one of the celebrities of this dale. In his youth he had been a sort of right-hand man of John Beever of the Thwaite, brother to the ladies of "*Hortus Inclusus*," and author of "*Practical Fly-Fishing*." On the death of his father, William Bell became the leading carpenter of the place, and the leading Liberal, and during Mr. Gladstone's last

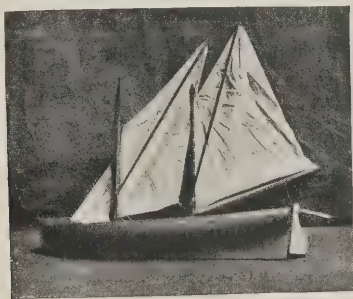
Administration he was nominated for a Justice of the Peace. Ruskin was told of his neighbour, and sent word that he would like to come and have a talk about politics. Now the carpenter was used to Conservative orators and Liberal arguers, but he knew that Ruskin was a different sort of man; and all day long before the hour fixed for the visit he was in a greatly perturbed state of mind, walking up and down and wondering—a new thing for him—how he should tackle this unknown personality. At last the distinguished guest arrived. He was solemnly welcomed and shown into the parlour. The door was shut upon the twain. The son (Mr. John Bell), who felt he had brought into contact the irresistible force and the irremovable post, waited about hoping it would be all right, but in much trepidation as the sound of talk inside rose from a murmur to a rumble, and from a rumble to a roar. At last his father's well-known voice came through the partition in no trembling accents: "Ye're wrong to rags, Mr. Ruskin!" Then he knew it *was* all right, and went about his work. And after that Ruskin and "ald Will Bell" were firm friends in spite of differences.

So Will Bell built the "Jump"—or, to be accurate, was master-builder, employing at this job Mont. Barrow, well known to boat-owners on Windermere for one of the most skilful of craftsmen, as his father was before him—and one fine day in spring she was launched at the boat-house with great ceremony. A wreath of daffodils was hung round her bows, and Miss Martha Gale christened her, with this little versicle which Ruskin made for the occasion:

Waves give place to thee!  
 Heaven send grace to thee!  
 Fortune to ferry  
 Kind hearts and merry!

There was one strange face in the group, one uninvited visitor. The people then at the Hall were not successful

managers, though they had interested Ruskin, perhaps more through the idyllic prettiness of their homestead than otherwise. He had helped to stave off the failure by lending them £300, which they proposed to pay in geese! And the stranger at the launch was the man in possession. Alas! for "these consecrated walls," and the disillusionments of our Arcadia. Perhaps it is wise to add, in plain words, that twenty years have



(Hargreaves, photographer)

TRIAL MODEL FOR THE "JUMPING JENNY"

wrought changes at the Hall, and that the present tenants are quite different people.

The "Jump," so launched at last, was always Ruskin's own boat, for his private particular use. Sometimes as a special honour the favoured guest was sent across the lake in her, rather than in a common boat; but to say the truth, if it wasn't for the honour of the thing, as the Irishman remarked when the bottom of the sedan-chair came out, we had as soon walk round. She rode the waves beautifully, but you didn't seem to get forrarder with her. Perhaps it was the fallacy of the Scott Russell lines that made her heavy, or must we put all the blame upon Ruskin? He tried to build a boat that would sail and row equally well, and that is not easy. She was never sailed, though the model, now in the Coniston Museum, is

rigged. The "Jump," still on the water and often used, is treasured, I think, chiefly as a relic—Ruskin's flagship. When she is repainted, the old pattern round the gunwale, his device, and the brilliant blue, his favourite colour, are always reproduced, and she looks sound enough to outlast us all.

At a later time, when he was staying at Sandgate (1887–88), he reverted to his fondness for boating, and had several very beautiful models built and rigged by Charles Dalby, of Folkestone, a past-master in the mystery. These models—the old Dover packet, old-style cutter and yawl, and so forth—are still at Brantwood.

In the spring of 1882, during a visit to London, Mr. Froude described to him the discovery of a Viking ship, which roused great interest. Writing home, he sketched it endwise and sidewise, with notes of its construction, and—"Froude told me she had a horse at the head." To most of his readers Ruskin has been exclusively the arm-chair philosopher, the dilettante of prints and pictures; but there was a vein of the old blood in him, as in the rest of us, which warmed to the rough sea-life that created Venice (read his prose poem thereon in "Modern Painters," vol. v., "The Wings of the Lion"), and England:—"Bare head, bare fist, bare foot, and blue jacket. If these will not save us, nothing will." He has told me of talks with Carlyle, who regretted he had not taken up the Kings of Norway earlier in life, instead of Frederick the Great, and spent his better strength upon the better subject; and Ruskin himself, though too late for evidences of the taste to appear in his writings, liked to hear of our seafaring ancestors of the North. It was a touch of this feeling that made him so scornful of "sailing-machines," not calling them boats at all. He would not even have a boat-house for his "Jump"; it would be too like yachting, and she must lie on the beach, in open harbour, in the good old way. When we used to laugh at Laurence Hilliard's "Snail,"

a Morecambe Bay fisherman's craft that wouldn't go, Ruskin always took her part. "You boys can't be content unless you are going fast. I won't have her called the 'Snail'; she is—" and this with his own peculiar lifting emphasis—"a Real Sea Boat."





III

RUSKIN'S GARDENING



### III

## RUSKIN'S GARDENING

THERE are two quite different sorts of garden lovers—those who raise flowers, and those who look for the landscape effect. I shall be scolded for saying so, but the first often make their gardens into museums ; very interesting, no doubt, but not so pleasant to live with as the half-wild bit of ground—lawn, trees and shrubbery, without a pane of glass in evidence—where there are just enough flowers, hardy perennials perhaps, to give a touch of colour in their season, but in the main a sense of green repose. I think the garden which the Lord planted eastward in Eden was like that ; a pleasance, where He could walk in the cool of the evening with Adam, and Adam had no need to run away, every minute, to look for slugs.

Ruskin, though he wrote about botany, and tried to be his own Linnæus, and though he loved well enough to see flowers (especially wild ones) on his table and outside his window, yet in his practical gardening was quite the landscapist. He liked making paths and contriving pretty nooks, building steps and bridges, laying out beds, woodcutting and so forth ; but I never remember him potting and grafting and layering and budding ; and as to the rarity of any plants in his garden, I believe he took far more pleasure in the wood-anemone—*Silvia*, he called it—than in anything buyable from the nurseryman's catalogue.

The Brantwood gardens as they now are, enlarged and

tended by a mistress, who loves and understands flowers, and glorified by their charming position on the shore of a mountain lake, are as near the perfect blend of detailed interest and picturesque beauty as anything can be in this northern climate. But they are not Ruskin's gardens. When the first glass-house went up, he used to apologise for it to his visitors; it was to please Mrs. Severn; it was to grow a few grapes for his friends; he did not believe in hot-houses: and he would take you up the steps he had contrived at the back of the house and point out the tiny wild growths in their crannies, as he led the way to his own private plot.

Sir Edwin Arnold, in a pleasant essay on Japanese rock-gardens, quoting Ruskin on the beauty of stones, wonders whether he would not have sympathised in these quaint tastes of the Far East. Ruskin had little to say in praise of Japanese art as he knew it, because they could not draw pretty figures, and he had no admiration for dwarfs or monsters; but one cannot help thinking that if he had seen Japan, and if it is all that travellers tell us, he might have written some enthusiastic passages on a people who love stones for their own sake and tub themselves daily. To him, his rock gardens were a joy for ever; and in his working years he set an example of Lake-district landscape-gardening which still, for all I know, remains unfollowed, and is worth a few paragraphs of record. You can see little of it now. During that last decade, when he wandered about his small domain like the ghost of his former self, no one could carry on his work. The paths he made and tended gradually became overgrown, the rocky watercourses were choked with stones, his private plot filled with weeds, for he could no longer dig in it; and now you can only trace what it has been in the little solitude left sacred to memory.

It was in the heart of the wood, approached by the steps and winding path—not gravelled, but true woodland track. About as large as a cottager's kitchen-garden, it was fenced on two sides with a wooden paling, and an old stone wall, mossy



THE WATERFALL AT BRANTWOOD DOOR. BY L. J. HILLIARD, 1885



and ivied, kept off the trees and their undergrowth on the higher side, up the hill. The trees, when he came, were the coppice of the country, oak and hazel, periodically cut down to the stubs, and used for turning bobbins and burning charcoal. This clearance is always a sad thing for the moment, when the leafy thicket is rased away, leaving bare earth and hacked stumps and the toppings strewn about to rot into soil; but next spring there are sure to be galaxies of primroses, if not daffodils and bluebells to follow, and foxgloves as the summer goes on; and so the kindness of nature heals the wound. Next year there are shoots from the stubs, a miniature forest which might even attract a Japanese; and as the saplings grow the flowers thin out, until in two or three seasons the children wonder why there are no primroses in the primrose-wood, and cannot believe they are gone to sleep for ten years. In the plantations of larch and timber trees the great bracken takes the place of this aftergrowth of flowerets, shooting up six or eight feet high where a clearing gives it a chance, and then again dwindles as the trees regain their strength, until under a well-grown larchwood there is nothing but a soft, deep, tressy grass, not rank and full tinted like the sward of the meadows, but grey-green and delicate and dry, though so thick and rich that there is no easier couch for a woodland dreamer.

When Ruskin came to Brantwood he would have his coppice cut no more. He let it grow, only taking off the weaker shoots and dead wood. It spindled up to great tall stems, slender and sinuous, promising no timber, and past the age for all commercial use or time-honoured wont. Neighbours shook their heads, but they did not know the pictures of Botticelli, and Ruskin had made his coppice into an early Italian altar-piece. Among those slender-pillared aisles you would not be surprised to see goddesses appear out of the green depths; and looking westward, the sun-dazzle of the lake and the dark blue of the mountains gazed in between the leaves. It was what the old Venetians



had seen in landward holidays and tried to remember for their backgrounds. That in itself was one form of Ruskin's gardening. To keep his forest at this delightful point of mystery, his billhook and gloves were always lying on the hall table, and after the morning's writing he would go up to the Brant (steep) Wood and chop for half an hour before luncheon. It was not the heroic axe-work of Mr. Gladstone, but such pruning as a Garden of Eden required to dress it and to keep it.

Then in that private plot he had his espalier of apples and a little gooseberry patch and a few standard fruit-trees and some strawberries, mixed with flowers. In one corner there were beehives in the old-fashioned penthouse, trailed over with creepers. The fourth side was unfenced, but parted from the wood by a deep and steep watercourse, a succession of cascades (unless the weather were dry, which is not often the case at Coniston) over hard slate rock. He used sometimes humorously to complain of the trouble it cost him to keep the beck clear of stones, and he could deduce you many a lesson in geology on the way his rivulet filled, rather than deepened, its bed.

It was crossed by a rough wooden bridge. I remember at the building of this bridge he was considerably annoyed because the workman, thinking to please him with unusually rude lines, had made the planks so flimsy that it was hardly safe. He insisted on solidity and security, though his stone steps were so irregular as to contradict all the rules which bid you make stairs in a flight equal, for fear of tripping your passenger.

Over the bridge and within the wood there were frequent hummocks and bosses of rock pushing through the soil, and each with its special interest of fern or flower. Many a visitor must have recalled or repeated—

Who loved the little rock, and set  
Upon its head the coronet?

while Ruskin led the way, pointing out each trail of ivy (convolvulus not allowed for fear of strangling the stems) and nest



RUSKIN'S RESERVOIR, BRANTWOOD



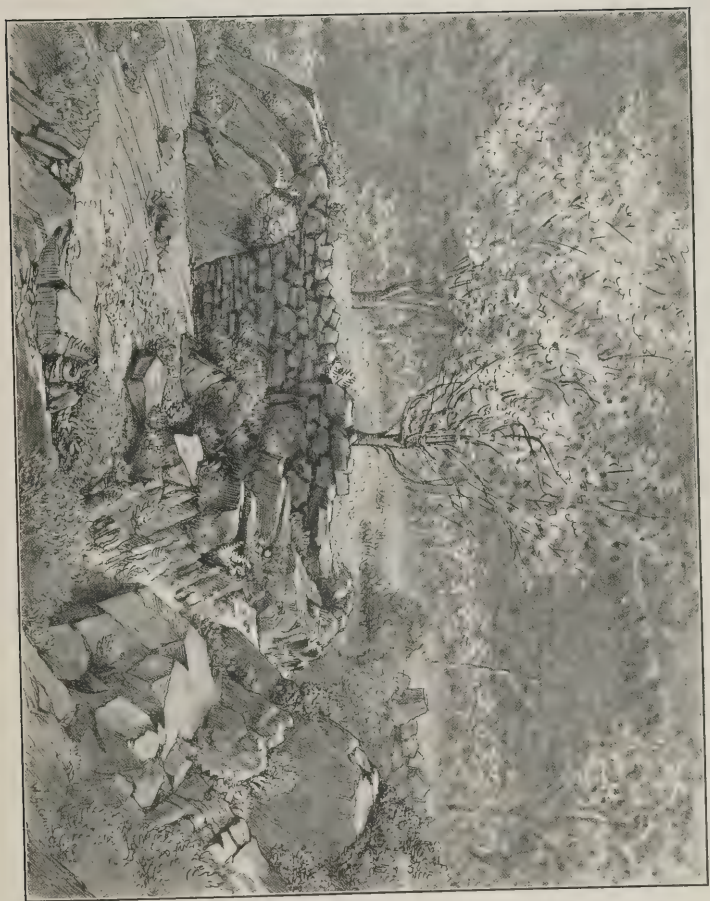
of moss, as a gardener of the other species might point out his orchids. Then suddenly forth of the wood you came upon the tennis-lawn—another concession to youthful visitors, for he played no athletic games. But in the creation of this glade he took the keenest delight, believing, as he said, in diggings of all sorts. He was the engineer, and the work was done in great part by the young people who were to play tennis on the ground when it was levelled—a rather distant hope, but eventually fulfilled. The tall, thin saplings have run up higher and higher all round the green : on one side you look through their veil to the long expanse of lake ; on the other, up the dark, wooded hill ; and on a sunny afternoon it has a curious touch of poetry. There is no statue on a pedestal or fountain playing in a basin, but on the mossy bank, beneath the graceful lines of virginal forestry, Decamerons might have been told. It is an oasis in the North-country farmer's neighbourhood, this Lake district which the tripper thinks just "country" as God made it, quoting Cowper, and not dreaming of the "native's" view that the land is an unroofed mutton-factory, with every inch of it "propuppy, propuppy, propuppy."

I do not mean to imply that Ruskin's gardening was wilfully anti-utilitarian. The charm of it was that it brought the natural advantages and local usages into a new light, with just the refinement of feeling which made a flight of steps into a rock-garden and a tennis-ground into a Purist painter's glade. Who but he would have planted his field with narcissus, scattered thinly among the grass, to surprise you with a reminiscence of Vevey ? And in the old garden below, though he did not create it, you can trace his feeling in the terraced zigzag of paths, hedged with apple and the cotoneaster which flourishes at Coniston, and filled in with sloping patches of strawberry and gooseberry. The average proprietor would have levelled his walks and capped his dwarf walls with flat slabs. This irregularity and cottage-garden business would have offended

those new-comers who buy a bit of nature at the Lakes and improve away all its beauties.

It was in the late 'seventies, when the first illness had forced him to spend most of his time at Brantwood, and in the early 'eighties, before final illness put an end to his activity, that Ruskin, having completed his woodland paths and gardens, and all the "diggings" at his harbour, went higher up the hill for new worlds to conquer. His bit of moor above the wood was opened out into a new sort of garden, quite as charming in its way as any other. It was a steep patch of hillside grandly overlooking the lake, with a foreground of foliage below and a background of mountains above; but as Nature left it—or rather as Nature made it after the original wild growth of oak and birch and holly had been cleared away by the charcoal-burners and sheep-farmers of past centuries. Strongly marked ridges of slate-rock cropped out slantwise, across and across the slope, their backs tufted over with heather and juniper, and their hollows holding water in sodden quagmires. Down the slope, from the bogs of the great moor behind, rising to a thousand feet above the sea in some places, there were two little streamlets which leapt the ridges and pooled in the hollows among ferns and mosses. All the green fields and farms of the dalesmen were once made out of such ground, and many of them at quite as great a height; indeed the actual elevation of this plot nowhere reaches five hundred feet. The problem was to take advantage of whatever useful features the site afforded without destroying its native charm. To drain and clear an intake and put it under grass, or to plant it outright, had been done before; but that was to do away with the moorland character altogether. Just as a portrait-painter studies to pose his sitter in such a light and in such an attitude as to bring out the most individual points and get the revelation of a personality, so Ruskin studied his moor, to develop its resources.

First, there were the streams; and his old theory of saving



RUSKIN'S MOORLAND GARDEN



the water suggested impounding the trickle in a series of reservoirs ; it might be useful in case of drought or fire. So we were marshalled with pick and spade every fair afternoon to the "Board of Works," as we called it ; and the old game of the Hinksey diggings was played over again. For what reason I never clearly understood, juniper was condemned on the moor as convolvulus in the wood ; and every savin-bush, as it is called in the district, was to be uprooted, while the heather was treasured, in spite of the farmers' rule to burn the heather off, now and then, for the sake of the grass which grows, for a while, in its place. Ruskin always regretted these heather fires, for they do not really make good grass-land, while they ruin the natural garden of ling and bell-heather.

When the basins were formed he found to his regret that no mere earthen bank would hold the water ; and skilled labour had to be called in to build dams of stone and cement, less pretty than the concealed dyke he had intended. But there was some consolation in devising sluices and clever gates with long lever handles, artistically curved, to shut and open the slit. One would have thought, sometimes, to see his eagerness over these inventions, that he had missed his vocation ; and he had indeed a keen admiration for the civil engineer, wherever the road and bridge, mine and harbour, did not come into open conflict with natural beauties which he thought just as essential to human life as the material advantages of business. And when his reservoirs were made, it was a favourite entertainment to send up somebody to turn the water on and produce a roaring cascade among the laurels opposite the front door.

Next, to illustrate his theory of reclaiming wastes, he set about his moorland garden. At the upper corner of this beck-course there was one ragged bit of ground against the fence wall. From the more rocky parts we were set to carry the soil to make terraces, which we walled up with the rough stones found in plenty under the surface. One wetter patch was planted with cranberries, and some apple- and cherry-trees



were put in, where the soil was deep and drainage provided. No wall or wire parted this little space of tillage from the wilder moor and its rabbits, for the design was to enlarge the cultivated area and make the moor a paradise of terraces like the top of the purgatorial mount in Dante ; and since this fragment of an experiment was completed, when strength no longer allowed him to stride up to this once favourite height, the whole has been left to Nature again. The apple-trees grew, but untended ; they still blossom. The cherries have run wild and are left to the birds. The rough steps from the rock-platform to the orchard terrace are disjointed, and fern is creeping through the grass.

But yet from out the little hill  
Oozes the slender springlet still,

as it did in those old Brantwood days when we picked and shovelled together, first unearthing its miniature ravine ; and as perhaps it may—for no one can foretell the fate of any sacred spot—when the pilgrim of the future tries to identify by its help alone the whereabouts of Ruskin's deserted garden.

IV

RUSKIN'S OLD ROAD



#### IV

### RUSKIN'S OLD ROAD

IN the Life of Ruskin three pages are given to his tour abroad in 1882, a journey of importance to him, because at a critical moment it gave him a new lease of life, and of unusual interest to his biographer, who accompanied him as secretary, which is to say "man-jack-of-all-trades." In such companionship much personality comes out ; and the gossip of this period, at greater length than the proportions of a biography allowed, may help to fill in some of the details of his portrait.

Very much broken down in health, despairing of himself and his mission, he left London on Thursday, August 10, 1882. Calais Tower roused none of the old enthusiasm ; he said rather bitterly, "I wonder how I came to write about it." But even in his depression the habit of work made him sketch once more the tracery of the Hôtel de Ville. He found out the trick of its geometrical pattern, and explained it, delighted. Then the old *chef* at the Hôtel Dessein was still in the flesh, and remembered former visits and sent up a capital dinner ; so the first day on foreign soil augured hopefully.

On the Saturday he woke up to sunshine at Laon, and took me round the town, setting me to work on various points. He began a drawing of the cathedral front, which he finished on the Monday before leaving. It was always rather wonderful how he would make use of every moment, even when ill-health and the fatigue of travelling might seem a good

reason for idling. At once on arriving anywhere he was ready to sketch, and up to the minute of departure he went on with his drawing unperturbed. In the afternoons he usually dropped the harder work of the morning, and went for a ramble out into the country; at Laon the hayfields and pear orchards south of the town gave him, it seemed, just as much pleasure as Chamouni.

Reims bored him; the cathedral he called confectioner's Gothic, and he could not get rid of the idea of champagne and all the vanities and vulgarities which hang on to the very word. There was an ugly prison, too, put up next the cathedral; and even St. Remi did not make amends. So he hastened on to Troyes, spending a few hours between trains at Châlons, where we "did" the town in the regular tourist fashion, finding, however, beautiful features of early Gothic at Nôtre Dame and the Madeleine.

At Troyes he spent the 17th, sketching hard at St. Urbain and the cathedral, and next morning reached Sens, a place loved of old for associations with parents and friends, and not less for its little gutter-brooks in the streets, which he pointed out with a sort of boyish glee. The afternoon walk in the valley of the Yonne and up the chalk hills brought much talk of the geology of flints and the especial charm of *coteau* scenery, which he said had never been cared for until Turner saw it and glorified this comparatively humble aspect of mountains in the "Rivers of France." He set me to draw the defaced statues on the porch of the cathedral, the "finest north of Alps" he declared; but we were getting on rather too fast, and he began to feel the reaction of fatigue. The weather was sultry, and on the 19th our journey to Avallon was followed by distant thunderstorms.

At Avallon he stayed till the end of the month. The place was new to him, but I think he was attracted to it by one of those obscure associations which so often ran in his mind—it must be interesting because it was named Avallon—Avalon

he called it always, dominated by the idea of the island-valley of repose where King Arthur found the immortality of fairyland. The first morning's work at the early church of St. Ladre, and the first afternoon's walk down the valley of the Cousin, with brilliant ling in blossom among bold red granite rocks, fully justified his choice. The town, on its Durham-like hill, swept round by the deep river-course, and unspoilt by modernisms, and the wooded, flowery, rocky neighbourhood, full of all that is most charming in French scenery—there are Roman remains, too, but of these he took less note—and the curious details of the twelfth-century church all attracted him mightily. The only drawback was the weather, which broke down with the thunder and gave us cold east winds and dark haze, in which sketching was a penance. This told upon him at once; he even dined alone, wearied out of evenings, and still trying to fix his mind on the writing work he always took with him—in this instance the new edition of "Sesame and Lilies" and the "Bible of Amiens." He burned the candle at both ends; out early to draw elusive detail of battered sculptures, walking far in the afternoon, and writing hard at night, impatient of remonstrance even from those who were much better qualified to order him about than a secretary.

To meet him here came Mr. Frank Randal, who was employed on drawings for "St. George's Work," and making bright, sunny sketches in which the neatest of outline was reconciled with the freshest of colouring. Also came his friend, Mr. Maundrell, to whom I take this chance of offering an apology which makes me blush to record. Among Ruskin's drawings was one, much in his Proutesque style, of a chapel at Rue, near Abbeville. It had been passed as his, when Mrs. Severn went through the portfolios with him, noting the subjects on the back of the mounts; and—with some hesitation, I confess, and neglect of the good rule "When in doubt, don't"—it was shown at both Ruskin Exhibitions as a work by the master, and greatly admired. Too late for correction, it was

found to be Mr. Maundrell's. Others have nearly caught Ruskin's style at times—"Bunney's, not mine," he has written on sketches by an assistant, for this very reason; but for all the more important drawings there is a good pedigree, and most of the smaller bits which have been shown or published have come from his sketch-books.

One good excursion from Avallon was to the church of Vézelay, the twelfth-century place elaborately restored by Viollet-le-Duc, and interesting for the meeting of Richard Cœur-de-Lion with the other leaders of the Crusade famous in "Ivanhoe" and "The Talisman." To Ruskin any restoration meant ruin; but as he went round the aisles, disdainful at first but gradually warming to the intelligence and skill of the great modern architect, he confessed that if restoration might be done at all it could not be better done. What pleased him much more was a hunt, on the way back, for the exact spot where the Avallon granite joined the limestone; he found the two rocks side by side in a hummock near the road, and was triumphant.

Montréal was another place of pilgrimage, and there the church with quaint wood-carvings and the picturesque village gave him a happy day. In his diary (on which see the next chapter) he scolded himself, after this excursion, for forgetting the good times; of a walk in the rain to the little oratory of St. Jean des Bons Hommes he said: "I ought to vignette it for a title to my books!" and of the Avallon neighbourhood he notes: "Altogether lovely, and like Dovedale and the Meuse and the glens of Fribourg in all that each has of best, and like Chamouni in granite cleavage, and like—itself, in sweet French looks and ways. . . . The miraculous fairy valley . . . one of the sweetest ever made by heaven. The Cyclopean walls, of blocks seven and eight feet long, and three feet thick—the largest—all averaging two and a half (feet) cube, at a guess, laid with their smooth cleavages to the outside, fitted like mosaic—the chinks filled with smaller stones,

altogether peculiar to this district of cleaving, and little twisting, granite." It was not only the scenery that he cared for, but the evidences of happy pastoral life, adapting Nature's gifts to human needs. But when, off the kindly granite and on the cold, grey limestone country, we passed a forlorn homestead, ruinous and dirty, he shrank back in the carriage, as if some one had thrown a stone at him.

On the last day of August he left Avallon, and with a short stay at Sémur reached his old quarters at the Hôtel de la Clochè, Dijon. He was already contemplating "*Præterita*," picking up the memories of early days, and planning a drive by the old road through Jura as his parents used to do it in the pre-railway period. He began by showing me where he bit his "Seven Lamps" plate in the wash-hand basin, and where Nurse Anne used to wake him of mornings. Meanwhile, for the book to be called "*Our Fathers have told us*," continuing "*The Bible of Amiens*," he would spend two days with the monks. Cîteaux, the home of the Cistercians, was the first day's trip, marred by the heat and dust, and by finding all vestiges of the monks replaced by an industrial school of the ugliest, which, nevertheless, he inspected with nicely restrained impatience. A moated grange on the wayside homeward caught his eye, and as he sketched it he tried to make me believe that this must at least be a bit of the monks' work, and the journey not in vain. But next day there were far more interesting experiences in a visit to St. Bernard's birthplace. He has described this fully in his lecture called "*Mending the Sieve*," in the volume of "*Verona, &c.*," and I need only recall the surprise of a bystander not wholly unsympathetic, when Ruskin knelt down on the spot of the great saint's nativity, and stayed long in prayer. He was little given to outward show of piety, and his talk, though enthusiastic, had been no preparation for this burst of intense feeling.

Later on the same day (Saturday, September 2) he left Dijon for the Jura drive. We passed Poligny, a usual resting-



place in bygone journeys, by train, and stayed at Champagne, where the old Hôtel de la Poste used to be one of his "homes." It had been splendid weather for the last few days, after a cold August in Central France ; and the first Jura walk was across the hill to the gorge of the Ain. I had often been through the Jura, as a blind, benighted modern, but never before loitered from slab to slab of its fissured limestone summits, looking for the foreground loveliness of nestling flowers which contrast so delicately with the quaint, crannied rock ; there is nothing which gives the same lyrical feeling except some of Nature's gardens in wild Icelandic lava-fields. How eager he was, and delighted with this open upland ! You know there is only one place where he speaks of "liberty" as a good thing, and there it means the liberty of this Jura walk, enjoyed that afternoon.

By-and-by we came to a wood. He cast about a little for the way through the trees, then bade me notice that the flowers of spring were gone : "You ought to have seen the wood-anemones, and oxalis, and violets" ; and then, picking his steps to find the exact spot by a twisted larch-tree, and gripping my arm to hold me back on the brink of the abyss, "That's where the hawk sailed off the crag, in one of my old books ; do you remember ?"

There were thunder clouds over the plain-country that evening, and we made no stop to sketch. On our drive next day up to the flat, high country of St. Laurent, with its pine forests and scattered cottages, and down into Morez, the weather worsened. Thence the road climbs by the side of the valley to the highest back of Jura at Les Rousses ; the road, he says, "walked most of the way, was mere enchantment." At a halt I sketched, when a break in the clouds gave sunbeams darting into the valley beneath, and wisps of white wreathed the steep forests. You see where he got that beautiful cadence to a fine passage, after comparing the Jura upland with a Yorkshire moor, and contrasting the becks of our fells with the enchanted



ON RUSKIN'S OLD ROAD, BETWEEN MOREZ AND LES ROUSSES

SEPTEMBER 1882



silence of open Jura. "The raincloud clasps her cliffs, and floats along her fields; it passes, and in an hour the rocks are dry, and only beads of dew left in the *Alchemilla* leaves—but of rivulet or brook, no vestige, yesterday or to-day or to-morrow. Through unseen fissures and filmy crannies the waters of cliff and plain have alike vanished; only far down in the depth of the main valley glides the strong river, unconscious of change."

Up at Les Rousses he pointed out the fort, then in building or newly built, with scorn—as if the Swiss on the one side or the French on the other could be kept in their bounds by stone walls, when real war comes; and then crossing the frontier there was the elation of getting into Switzerland. "Why do you like it better than France?" he asked. I was just trying to say why, that it is a free country and some more innocent gush, when the Swiss Customs officers ran up, and insisted on overhauling us, for they don't often see travellers as in the old days at Les Rousses. I was mightily crestfallen and he not a little delighted at this exemplification of "liberty"; but he did not make the incident a horrid example in "*Præterita*."

Here we diverged a little from the old road of his youth, by going east a few miles to St. Cergues instead of making for the Col de la Faucille at once. The clean inn delighted him; pine boards on the floor, scrubbed white, and no needless furniture. Here he said we should stay a week and rest; he had much to write—first ideas for "*Præterita*," you understand. But the next days were wet, and he sat in his bedroom writing diligently at first, while I caught some bright intervals for a sketch, though we never saw the line of the Alps quite clear.

In the lecture on "the Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century," one of his least convincing though most sincerely meant utterances, there are references to the strange weather of those days. All the way up from Morez he wanted me to come into the carriage and shut the window because of a treacherous east wind, and in my sketch you can see a certain

smoky, not only thundery, look in the clouds. At St. Cergues this east wind haze was still more pronounced, the Lake of Geneva ruffled and white, with patches of shadow from small "sailor-boy" clouds, while the whole range opposite was not exactly shrouded but veiled in a persistent thickness of air. Above, the sky was bright, with blue and streaky cirrus, and between the showers the sun glittered on the trees. That fitful wind with the brownish-grey haze he called the plague-wind, and in all his lecture there is no very definite explanation of it, but much declamation against it as the ruin of landscape, and some vague hints of portent, almost as if he had been a prophet of old seeing the burden of modern Babylon in the darkened sun.

It is smoke. Any one who haunts our Lake district hills knows it well. On coronation night I saw it trailing from Barrow and Carnforth up the Lune valley as far as Tebay, always low and level, leaving the upper hills clear, perfectly continuous and distinct from the mist of water. This winter, from the top of Wetherlam on a brilliant frosty day, I saw it gradually invade the Lake district from the south-east; the horizontal, clean-cut, upper surface at about 2000 feet; the body of it dun and semi-transparent; its thick veil fouling the little cotton-woolly clouds that nestled in the coves of the Kirkstone group, quite separate from the smoke-pall; and by sunset it had reached to Dungeon Gill, leaving the Bow Fell valleys clear. Coming down by moonlight I found the dales in a dry, cold fog, and heard that there had been no sunshine at Conistone that afternoon. This is Ruskin's plague-cloud, and the real enemy of the weather not only in England but in the Alps. You will see it, according to the wind, on either side of Zurich most notably, and the distance this blight will travel is more than the casual reader might believe. A strong wind carries it away, but only to deposit it somewhere else, cutting off the sun's rays, and breeding rain and storm. This was not understood twenty years ago, but Ruskin's observations



LAKE OF GENEVA AND DENT DOCHES UNDER THE SMOKE-CLOUD, FROM ST. CERGUES

SEPTEMBER 1882





of the weather were perfectly accurate and his regrets at the changed aspect of Alpine landscape were only too justifiable.

On Thursday, September 7, he had tired of dull weather at St. Cergues, and written up his notes for "Præterita"; he proposed to climb the Dôle and get onward to Geneva. It is a very easy walk of about a couple of hours up the gently sloping backs of the Helvellyn-like Jura range; and from its top one should get a grand view of the lake and the Alps to Mont Blanc. He walked up as briskly as ever; there was a cold wind but sun overhead, though the mountains to the south and east were still in the "plague-cloud." There was no sketching to be done, and we followed the ridge down to the Col de la Faucille. If you look at his map of the Jura, facsimiled at page 109 of this volume, the Col is where the road suddenly turns round into zigzags after going straight south-west behind the Dôle; and you remember how he names the whole chapter from this one spot, as a chief landmark in his memories, for there he always used to get his first full view of the "Mount Beloved." Few travellers know it, he says; but it is far from unknown to all who have lived in la Suisse Romande. There, they take school-children up mountains. Far better than Helvellyn is known to the English school child, the "dear Dôle" is known to every youngster who has learnt to sing (to the tune of "Life let us cherish") the song of

La Suisse est belle,  
Oh qu'il la faut chérir!

We were not quite without our view. For a moment, too short for a sketch, Mont Blanc loomed through the dull haze, red in the sunset, brick red, not Alpine rose; and then all was grey. We found our carriage and drove down. I was waked in the darkness by Ruskin saying, "This is where Voltaire lived." "Oh, indeed!" said I.

Next morning, from his old front rooms at the Hôtel des Bergues, where he had already begun a sketch of the houses



opposite, merely for love of them, we went out in the heat to see the Rhône. All the haze had gone, at least from the nearer view, and he seemed never tired of looking at the water from the footbridge and wherever it was visible. I wondered why he would not come on ; but now I know. "Fifteen feet thick—of not flowing but flying water"—I will not quote the wonderful pages which every lover of Ruskin, of landscape, and of English undefiled, must know—the "one mighty wave that was always itself, and every fluted swirl of it constant as the wreathing of a shell" ; and then the bit about its blue, and "the innocent way" of it, and its dancing and rippling and glittering, "and the dear old decrepit town as safe in the embracing sweep of it as if it were set in a brooch of sapphire"—that was what he was thinking, and storing up in his mind the famous description which showed that even so late, in shattered health and, as people said, impaired powers, he could talk and write as brilliantly as ever.

That afternoon in the glaring sunshine we drove out of Geneva through suburban villadom—he much amused at the modern fashion of house-names, "Mon Repos," "Chez Nous," and so forth—towards Monnetier. He was at the moment healthily interested in Alpine structure, the geology of scenery, and could forget "St. George" in his eagerness to expound his views on the cleavage of the Salève. I made a slight note of the lines, the cathedral-like buttresses which flank the level-bedded masonry of the great mountain-wall with masses of a different rock, vertically cloven ; and the gorge of Monnetier which cuts the range across with an unexpected breach ; and we went over his old debate with the Genevese geologists. Then we climbed the Echelle, and from the top found the Annecy Alps fairly clear, but I think the same heaviness over the greater snow-peaks. At last we reached Mornex, his old home in the 'sixties, when he was writing "*Munera Pulveris*" and first seriously grappling with the social problems which afterwards became his chief theme in so many lectures and books.

A letter he wrote that evening, to describe the visit, has recently been published ; how he found his old house a restaurant, with people drinking on the terrace. He was, though he did not say so, rather cast down by the change—he who always deplored changes ; but brightened when the landlord guessed who he must be, and quite cheered up—with that last infirmity of noble minds—on hearing that the English sometimes came to see Ruskin's house. Indeed, it was more



THE GORGE OF MONNETIER AND THE BUTTRESSES  
OF THE SALÈVE

his home than many a house in England where he spent longer years, for it was of choice, not of necessity, that he lived there, and would have continued there to his own great advantage but for his father's death, which recalled him to the care of his widowed mother.

One phrase in that letter as now printed seems to have pained and alarmed some of his friends ; but surely without cause. He says to account for beginning his letter on the wrong side of the paper—as most people seem to do nowadays—that he had taken a glass too much Burgundy. The son of the sherry-merchant, with old-fashioned notions on the fitness of things, always took a glass or two of wine at dinner ; one of his sayings was, “ A glass of good wine never hurt anybody.” But I am sure all his personal friends will bear me out that it never went beyond the glass or two. He was no drinker, and

his very strong anti-teetotal attitude was simply the expression of his own habitual and easy temperance. That evening's dinner I remember well. After our walk from Veyrier to Pont d'Etrembières, and more sauntering by the Rhône in a beautiful red sunset, we came in late. At table we had some debate about the pictures on the walls of the hotel sitting-room, and he would not have it that Madame Vigée Lebrun's portrait of herself and her daughter was charming. "No decent woman," he said, "would paint herself with bare arms, like that!"—which was quite his usual way of thinking about a much-discussed question of art. And then we settled to a little after-dinner writing, and you will not be surprised if we both nodded over our pens after that long hot day—and, of course, the Burgundy.

v

RUSKIN'S "CASHBOOK"



## RUSKIN'S "CASHBOOK"

So it is lettered on the back ; but his titles, as every one knows, are far-fetched. There are some accounts in this volume, but most of it is filled with a diary of the tour abroad in 1882, and subsequent entries, very neatly written ; the red lines for *£ s. d.* serving to keep the manuscript within margins, just like print.

Ruskin's journals, I understand, are not to be published. The bulk of their contents—landscape descriptions and various notes on natural history, architecture, and many different subjects—have been worked into his books. The remainder consists of daily jottings about the weather, always important to one whose chief pleasure was in scenery, with fragmentary hints of his occupations or travels, and still more fragmentary mention of persons. They are not exactly memoranda ; still less the memoirs of a literary man, written with one eye on the public. They are mere soliloquies of the moment, gossip of himself to himself before breakfast.

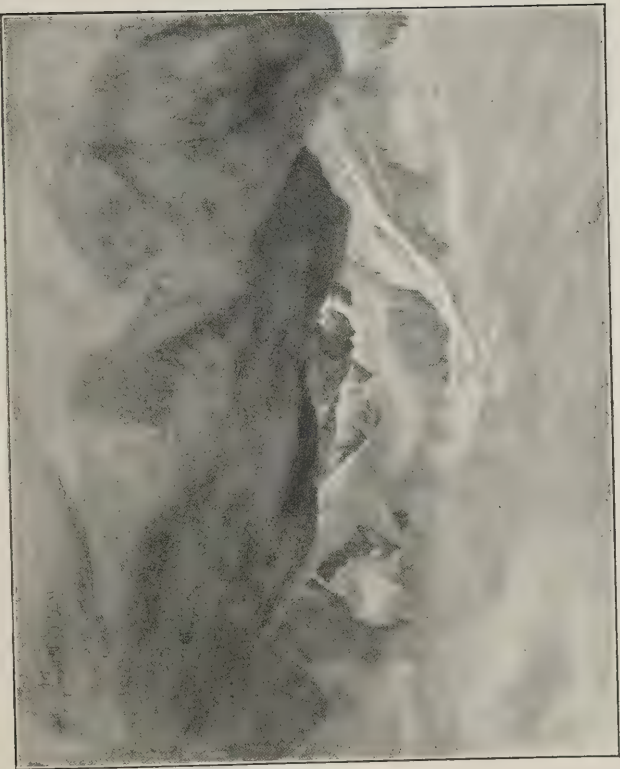
While he lived, though I had often occasion to refer to these journals, I never felt quite at liberty to open this "Cash-book," with its private notes on a period when I was practically alone with him ; his valet, Baxter, was also of the party, but at meals and at work, on walks and drives, he had usually to put up with my company. He was exceedingly and unfailingly kind, but exacting ; it would have needed great self-confidence

to be sure of his good opinion. But now that these papers require it, to paint his portrait as he was at that time, I have taken advantage of Mrs. Severn's kind leave; and in continuing the story of the tour I can sometimes add to my reminiscences Ruskin's impressions on the spot as recorded by himself.

From Geneva we went up to Sallenches (September 9, 1882), hoping to see the Alps, in spite of the smoke-cloud. He was at the moment thinking and talking chiefly of "artistic geology," if one may coin a parallel to "artistic anatomy"—the old subject of his "Modern Painters," vol. iv. In the chapter on the Old Road I said *healthily* interested, for any work on Nature was good for him personally, and this tour was for the sake of health after long and recurrent attacks of illness.

In those days, and to the few who cared much more for himself than his mission, St. George and St. Benedict were the enemies; his Guild and all the worries connected with it, and his ethico-socio-political meditations, mixed with much wandering into Greek and mediæval mythology, always meant mischief to him. So after the visit to Cîteaux and the birth-place of St. Bernard, it was good to see him eager for the mountains, and looking out for well-known twists in the limestone strata, and clefts and cascades, points of view and distant glimpses, all the way up the valley. If only the smoke-cloud would lift, and a spell of fair weather would tempt him to linger among the Alps, hammering rocks and sketching cottages, the object of the journey would be gained.

There was a horrid new road being made high up on the flank of his favourite mountain, the Brezon, whose top he had wanted to possess. At Cluses, what were those sticks in the meadow? I asked; and learnt that they marked out the long-intended railway. A railway in the valley of the Arve! It meant to him simply the end of all that made the glory and grandeur of this classic ground. But he was partly comforted



MONT BLANC CLEARING

SKETCHED WITH RUSKIN AT SALENCHES, SEPTEMBER 1882





by the thought that after all it might not be, or, at least, not in his time. Maglans and the Nant d'Arpenaz were still as Turner painted them ; and though his old familiar resting-place at St. Martin was no longer open as an inn, we could stay across the valley at Sallenches, within easy walks of many favourite haunts.

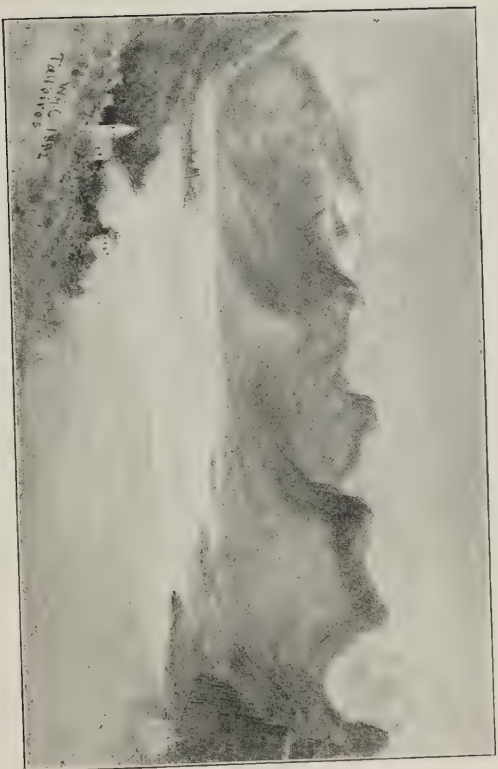
The next day was Sunday, which he usually spent more quietly than other days. We took the walk his father and he used to take on many Sundays passed in that neighbourhood, up a glen to the south of the village. In his diary that day he began an analysis of the Psalms—he had been taking them for his morning Bible-readings ; and I find that at St. Cergues, on the 5th, he had thankfully noted the arrival of a telegram with good news from home, just as he was reading me the 104th Psalm. He did not hold "family prayers" as a habit, but sometimes when he was delighted with a nice chapter he couldn't keep it to himself.

Early next morning Mont Blanc was clear, though soon clouded (the diary is quoted in the "Storm-cloud" lecture) ; and then, in pursuance of the geology study he had begun he set to work "to do a little Deucalion," but opened Job instead, at xi. 16, and read on "with comfort" the "glorious natural history" of the old book. Next day he noted the second speech of Zophar as "the leading piece of political economy" which he ought to have quoted in "Fors."

In spite of the dull weather we had a good ramble up the valley he called "Norton's Glen," from the remembrance of walks there with Professor Charles Eliot Norton ; and though sketching was little use, he was happy in the contemplation of boulders. It was in coming down from that walk (if I remember right ; the diary does not mention it) that I got such a scolding for proposing to extract a fossil from a stone in a vineyard terrace-wall : "You bad boy ! Have you no respect for property ?" or words to that effect ; and I had to leave the specimen *in situ*. But next day I "scored" with a

careful drawing of the Nant d'Arpenaz, disentangling the contorted beds of limestone ; and in the diary is a copy from my sketch, a subject, he said, he had often tried in vain. On the way back to Sallenches we looked at the old Hôtel du Mont Blanc at St. Martin, which gives a title to one of the chapters of "Præterita," and need not be described here ; but he was so taken with it and its memories that he asked whether it was for sale, and really formed a plan of buying it, and coming to live there. The diary gives various reasons, ending with one of the oddest ; I had made some verses about the place, rather on the lines his talk had suggested, but ending with more optimism, and these, too, he notes, contributed to the "leadings" which pointed him to a new home in Savoy. A little later there came a letter addressed to "MM. Ruskin et Collingwood"—"Quite like a firm," he said ; "I wonder what they think we're travelling in ; but I hope we'll always be partners"—the terms of the offer I forget, but they did not seem practicable, or Coniston might have known him no more.

At least, it was possible, and it would have been good in many ways for him ; but there were ties to think of. Next day, after rain in the valley and snow on the Varens, and swallows gathering in crowds along the eaves and cornices of the square, there was a grand clearance at sunset, and he wrote to Miss Beever the note printed in "Hortus Inclusus" about seeing Mont Blanc—"a sight which always redeems me to what I am capable of at my poor little best, and to what loves and memories are most precious to me. So I write to *you*, one of the few true loves left. The snow has fallen fresh on the hills, and it makes me feel that I must soon be seeking shelter at Brantwood and the Thwaite." And yet he was greatly tempted to stay. On the splendid morning which followed he wrote in his journal, "Perfect light on the Dorons, and the Varens a miracle of aerial majesty. I—happy in a more solemn way than of old. Read a bit of Ezra and referred to Haggai ii. 9—'In this place will I give peace.'"



THE HEAD OF THE LAKE OF ANNECY

SKETCHED WITH RUSKIN AT TALLOIRES, SEPTEMBER 1882



Letters, however, were expected at Geneva, and with many plans for Sixt and Chamouni he turned his back on Sallenches for the time and had a "marvellous drive through the valley of Cluse; C—— sectionising (making notes of limestone strata) all the way. Divine walk to old spring under Brezon." Then he reproves himself for his annoyance at the "plague-wind" and tiresome letters at Geneva, "for I shall try to remember the Aiguille de Bionassay of the 13th at evening and the Nant d'Arpenaz looked back at yesterday morning—with my morning walk once more among the dew above Sallenches—for ever and a day."

Without keeping constantly before one's mind his passionate love of scenery it is impossible to put a right estimate on much that he has written. There are comparatively few people whose chief pleasure is in taking a walk and looking at the country, without any notion of sport or games to eke out the interest. It is true that he sketched and wrote, but his pleasure was in seeing. It was his admiration of Nature that had brought him to admire Art in his youth, and I think it is not too much to say that Art was always a secondary thing to him personally. The desire to see Art healthily and nobly practised made him study the life of the craftsman and the craftsman's surroundings, spiritual and material. The material needs of Victorian society pressed upon him "Unto this Last" and "St. George"; the spiritual needs drove him back upon ancient religious ideals, "The Queen of the Air" and "St. Benedict." All these various strands of thought were closely woven together in his life, but from the beginning to the end the love for natural scenery was the core of the cable. You gather already from this "Cashbook" that a few days among the Alps had quite restored him to physical strength, and given him hopes and happiness.

On Saturday, September 16, we left Geneva for Annecy, intending more limestone geology, and thenceforward had many days' driving with the "Mephistopheles coachman and the

Black Dog," as he put it at first. Later on he became enthusiastic over the same coachman for his capital driving and care of his horses, and because of the story of the dog Tom, whom, the man said, he had rescued from death at the hands of an American owner at Nice. Tom, with his spiked fur collar, was usually absent at the start. The driver said he was shut up so that he might not annoy Messieurs ; but he always appeared, was scolded, and forgiven, and petted for the rest of the way. Affection for animals appealed to Ruskin, and in France one sees much of it. On one of these drives we stopped for lunch out of doors before a wayside inn. To this lunch there came a little dog, two cats, and a pet sheep, and shared our wine, bread, and Savoy sponge-cakes. The sheep at last got to putting its feet on the table, and the landlady rushed out and carried him off in her arms into the house ; but Ruskin, I think, would quite as soon have let the creature stay. At Annecy the landlady told me stories of his big St. Bernard dog, how he was defended from other dogs by the cat, and how sometimes they quarrelled, and then the dog had to go and sit on the mat out of doors until the cat had forgiven him ; how the cat also was in the habit of catching swallows on the wing, and bringing them in to show—as, certainly, cats do with the mice they catch—and then she would let them go uninjured. This delighted Ruskin at dinner, and may have suggested the dream which I see he records in his "Cashbook"—"dreamt of a fine old lion who was quite good if he wasn't kept prisoner ; but when I had got him out, I didn't know what to do with him." The parting with Tom and his master I have mentioned elsewhere—how he gave the man twenty francs for a *bonne main* and two francs over for a *bonne patte*, he said, to the dog !

At Annecy, in the pleasant Hôtel Verdun, he confessed himself already stronger, and fit for anything but proofs and business letters ; but the "plague-cloud" still hung over the view. He noted that the smoke from the factory chimneys



THE MONT CENIS TUNNEL IN SNOW

SKETCHED WITH RUSKIN AT MODANE, NOVEMBER 11, 1882





could not be told from the clouds except by its density, and mixed with the mist so as to throw a pall over the lake from the town to the Tournette—the great mountain of the neighbourhood above Talloires. But still he did not see that the black, ragged, dirty weather was caused by the smoke, though he compared it with a London November. The nearer scenery was visible and beautiful. The blue lake, always blue, with a light of its own, and Talloires, with pleasant associations and unspoiled surroundings of most romantic character, charmed him as of old. We drove there the first Sunday; he took me up to Eugène Sue's house and then on to the cascade, two and a half hours' walk, and then sauntered among the vineyards and along the bay, under the plane-tree avenues, driving home in an open carriage, and said he had not spent such an idle day for ten years. Next day we "did" the Gorge of the Fier, and discussed the possible causes of this great ravine, through which the river plunges so unexpectedly and, one would think, unnecessarily. Then to Talloires again, and planned return for work.

Meanwhile he had made appointments in Italy. He talked of a rush to Rome and hasty visits to Lucca and Florence, coming back soon to the Alps. But this turned out to be a longer journey than he had meant. His seal-motto was "To-day," and the business of the moment was always the most important with him; and so the Italian tour was prolonged to nearly two months. It ended in his catching a thorough cold at Pisa through sketching in November winds, and in his longing for the clear air of the Alps again, before returning to London for the lecture he had promised to give in December. This was the lecture announced as "Crystallography," but delivered as "Cistercian Architecture," about which he said, joking at his own expense, that it would probably have come to much the same thing whatever the title had been. I did not quite see why he should lecture on either; but he declared himself quite well, and as we had dropped crystallography—the chief subject before the tour—for

cathedrals and abbeys in Italy, he shut himself up at Pisa, cold and all, to write his lecture. Then having, as he thought, mastered it, we ran north. He wanted to stay at St. Michel, a favourite place on the Mont Cenis line, but high, and likely to be bleak in November for a man with a bad cold, I thought—very possibly mistaken. I took tickets for Aix-les-Bains, and we had our only quarrel on that trip. I felt particularly guilty as he recounted to me, in an injured tone, the horrors of Aix, the one place he abominated, and the beauties of St. Michel, while the train climbed the Dora valley to Bardonecchia in fairly fine weather.

On the French side it was deep snow and bitter weather as we ran down to Aix. The next day was delightful, but I always shirked the recollection of my misdemeanour until I found how his diary-entries ignored it. "The cold's quite gone! Friday in glowing sunshine, Pisa to Turin; Saturday in frightful damp and cold, Turin to Aix; but quite easy days both. Sun coming out now. Dent de Bourget over mist and low cloud, very lovely, as I dressed."

The next entry I copy because it shows that he was not as entirely hostile to railways as the casual reader imagines. Writing of the ride to Annecy he says in the "Cashbook": "An entirely divine railway-*coupé* drive from Aix by the river gorges; one enchantment of golden trees and ruby hills." But it was a splendid day. In clumsier phrasing I wrote home of "all the prettiest autumn colours that ever were made out of remnants of old rainbows patched up into a gala dress for the world."

At Annecy we delayed only long enough for me to get rooms in the Hôtel de l'Abbaye at Talloires, where we stayed from the 14th to the 22nd in stormy, snowy weather. He was quite well at first, and proud of leading the way down the steep mountain-tracks—well known to him—in the dark after long walks; but some days we could not get out at all. I sat writing by the log fire in the dining-room; he preferring his

A SAVOY TOWN IN SNOW





bedroom, with what glimpses could be got of the lake through snowstorms; and in the night the wind howled through deserted corridors—for the place was once a real monastery—until it became quite uncanny. His bad dreams had gone, but he could not get exercise enough to sleep well. The lecture was variously rewritten, monks and myths chasing one another through his brain, instead of the crystal-cleavages and rock-forms he had set out to study. St. Benedict had been too strong for us, and the ghost of St. Bernard of Talloires (or of Menthon, not the St. Bernard of his former pilgrimage, but a tenth-century hermit, whose cave is still shown) who saw "not the Lake of Annecy, but the dead between Martigny and Aosta," and founded the hospice that bears his name—as Ruskin would fain have founded, in another way, a refuge for those who fall in the nineteenth-century struggle for life; but fell himself in attempting it.

I did not know at the time that he was meditating a return to his Professorship at Oxford. He kept that a secret, and sent me off on a special mission to draw Alps in snow. Rejoining him at Geneva I found him in the depths of misery, with the weather bad and his work going too slowly forward, and the glamour all gone out of his "mother town" of Geneva, "or what was once Geneva," he said, ruined by touristry and luxury into a mere suburb of Paris, which was a suburb of hell. So through cold and flooded France he took his way homeward. At Paris, Hôtel Meurice was no longer what it had been; the pneumatic clock in his room, with its minute-gun of a tick and a jerk, got on his nerves, and he demanded of the bewildered waiter that it should be stopped. The Tuileries were in ruins, placarded for sale as building material. In the bookshops he could not buy the books he sought, but, as it seemed, only photographs of actresses. The Louvre, even, in such surroundings gave him only suggestions of irritation. And it was a thankful secretary who saw him safely over the Channel and back to Herne Hill on the first Saturday in December.

But the journey was not a failure. At Lucca he made some of his best drawings, and the descriptive passages in "Præterita" and elsewhere, written on that tour, or from notes then made, are among his finest; and he was able to write in his "Cashbook" on December 3: "Slept well, and hope to be fit for lecture to-morrow; very happy in showing our drawings and complete sense of rest after three months' tossing." Early in the next year he found himself able to take up his old work at Oxford, and for awhile—but only for awhile—it seemed that the storm-cloud of his life had cleared away.

VI

RUSKIN'S ILARIA





## RUSKIN'S ILARIA

ON Friday, September 22, 1882, we were at Turin. "Filthy city," Ruskin wrote in his diary. "One pestilence now of noise and smoke ; and I got fearfully sad and discouraged, not only by this, but by not caring the least any more for my old pets of pictures, and not being able to see the minerals in close, dark rooms." But he adds, "Note the unique white amianth," and so forth, and he seemed to know the collection by heart. As to the pictures, the way he pointed out how Vandyck *enjoyed* the laying on of his colour, in a portrait of King Charles, gloating over the horse's mane and the delicate dexterity of the armour, makes me hope that even the steam tramways of Turin had not utterly darkened his life.

Once out of the town his spirits rose. "Alps clear, within twenty or thirty miles of Monte Viso ; then through sandhills of Brà to Montenotte, down among the strange mounds and dells of the Apennine gneiss, to Savona walled down to the sea, beside a dismantled fortress which is certainly one of Turner's late subjects. Then among the olives and palms, and by the green serpentines, under darkening clouds, with constant boom and sigh of waves, to Cogoleto." But at Genoa the Sunday was "a day of disgust at all things. Proud palaces, foolish little St. Georges over their doors. Duomo in my pet style, not doing it credit ; and a long climb over rocks, and road of black limestone veined with white, commanding all the

heaps, rather than hills, of the mouldering earth, looking almost barren in its dull grass, on which the suburbs of Genoa, hamlet and villa, are scattered far and wide; the vast new cemetery, their principal object of view and glorification, seen by the winding of the waterless river-bed."

To most of us there is nothing more exhilarating than the platform-shout when the south express starts—"Parr—tenza per Spezia — Pisa — Livorno — Firenze — Civitavecchia — Roooma!" and the clattering dash through tunnel after tunnel, among the rocks and green breakers of that wonderful coast. But it only worried and unnerved him. It was not his old road.

It was dull weather at Pisa after the first dewy morning for the Campo Santo; and there were "entirely diabolical" trams and chimneys in the town since his last visit. The streets, every reach of them loved of old for some jewel of mellowed architecture, were changing with modern progress. The town was noisier and dirtier than in days of yore. He had come to meet Nicola Pisano and company; but the ghosts wouldn't rise. "Penny whistles from the railroad perpetual, and view of town from river totally destroyed by iron pedestrian bridge. Lay awake very sad from one to half-past four, but when I sleep my dreams are now almost always pleasant, often very rational. A really rather beautiful one of consoling an idiot youth who had been driven fierce, and making him gentle, might be a lesson about Italy. But what is Italy without her sky—or her religion?" So he broke off work in the Baptistery on Michaelmas Day at noon, and ordered the carriage for Lucca.

Every one knows the route; over the Maremma, between the sea and the mountains. Peaks of Carrara clouded to the north; ruins of Ripafratta frowning over the crags; "vines olives, precipices." At last you see a neat little town, boxed up in four neat walls, with rows of trees on the ramparts and towers looking over the trees; it is just like the mediæval



THE PALACE OF PAOLO GUINIGI, LUCCA



town in the background of a triptych. Silk-mills there are, but not in evidence—at least, so it was twenty years ago.

As we drove up to the gate that afternoon the Customs officers turned out, and we laughed when the coachman shouted: "English family! Nothing to declare!" and the officers bowed, unquestioning. "So much nicer, isn't it?" said Ruskin, "than being bundled about among trucks and all the hideous things they heap round railway stations"; and in a few minutes we were in front of the Hotel Royal of the Universe. Signor Ruskin was expected; family and servants were at the door; everybody shook hands. The cook was busy with the dinner, I think; for when we had seen our rooms—he took the plainest of the tall, partitioned suite with rococo decorations, palatial but tarnished—"First," he said, "I must go and see the cook;" and so away to the kitchen.

He was patient of life's little worries; but he liked a good dinner when it was there. I remember the serviette full of crumbly chestnuts, and the Hermitage—afternoon sun meanwhile beating through half-shut persianes in dusty air, and a peep of greeny-blue hills over the square—Ruskin lifting his glass for a birthday toast. There was a certain damsel, whose own folk called her the Michaelmas goose; he put it more prettily: "Here's to St. Michael, and Dorrie, and All Angels!"

Then he went out to see Ilaria.

She was an early flame of his. He must have seen Ilaria before 1845, but it was in that eventful year he fell in love. Ilaria was, of course, the marble Lady of Lucca; but falling in love is not too strong a word.

The Forty-five in the nineteenth century had its Rebellion almost as full of consequences as the Forty-five of the century before. The raid of Prince Charlie opened up the Highlands, and gave us Ossian and Scott and Romanticism; little else. The raid of John Ruskin, in 1845, for the first time wandering

free and working out his own thoughts among the Old Masters and mediæval ruins of Italy, started the whole movement which made British art decorative and philanthropic. There were others helping, but he led the way ; and it was in that Forty-five that he "went up the Three Steps and in at the Door."

The passage in which he first described Ilaria is almost hackneyed. "She is lying on a simple couch with a hound at her feet. . . . The hair is bound in a flat braid over the fair brow, the sweet and arched eyes are closed, the tenderness of the loving lips is set and quiet ; there is that about them which forbids breath ; something which is not death nor sleep, but the pure image of both."

Who or what the lady might have been in the flesh he hardly seems to have cared ; at least he never dwelt on the story. She was daughter of a Marquis of Carretto, and wife of Paolo Guinigi, chief of a powerful family in Lucca. In 1405 she died. In 1413 Paolo was building that palace with the tower, now a poor-house, from which he ruled his fellow townsmen with a rod of iron. She never saw the arcaded palace, and the frowning, machicolated tower ; she could never have had part or lot in the tyranny of his later rule. We often read in history of a woman keeping within bounds the nascent fierceness of a man who—losing her—let himself go and became the scourge of his world. But in all his pride Paolo remembered the pretty wife, untimely lost.

The very year he built his castle he tempted away the greatest sculptor of the age from his native town and thronging engagements to carve her a tomb. Jacopo della Quercia came to Lucca in 1413, and six years later left after finishing this and other sculptures there. He could hardly have known Ilaria ; he must have worked from very insufficient materials in getting her portrait, and it must have been a tiresome and delicate business to satisfy his patron, his tyrant. But then Quercia was "a most amiable and modest man," and he had the secret

ILARIA DEL CARRETTO  
HEAD OF THE EFFIGY BY JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA IN LUCCA CATHEDRAL.







of noble portraiture, "Truth lovingly told." The sort of critics who do not gush say of this work that it is the first masterpiece of the Early Renaissance. It has all the best qualities of mediæval art—its severe symbolism and decorative effect, with all the best of the later classicism—its reality, softness and sweetness.

Paolo's enemies before long drove him out of Lucca, and the city wreaked vengeance on the tyrant by shattering his wife's tomb, this masterpiece. Somehow the effigy itself was spared, and set up again with bits of the wreck against the bare church wall. It was this dead lady, this marble lady, with browned, translucent cheeks, and little nose just bruised away at the tip, that took Ruskin's imagination in his youth. In his age he wrote, "It is forty years since I first saw it, and I have never found its like."

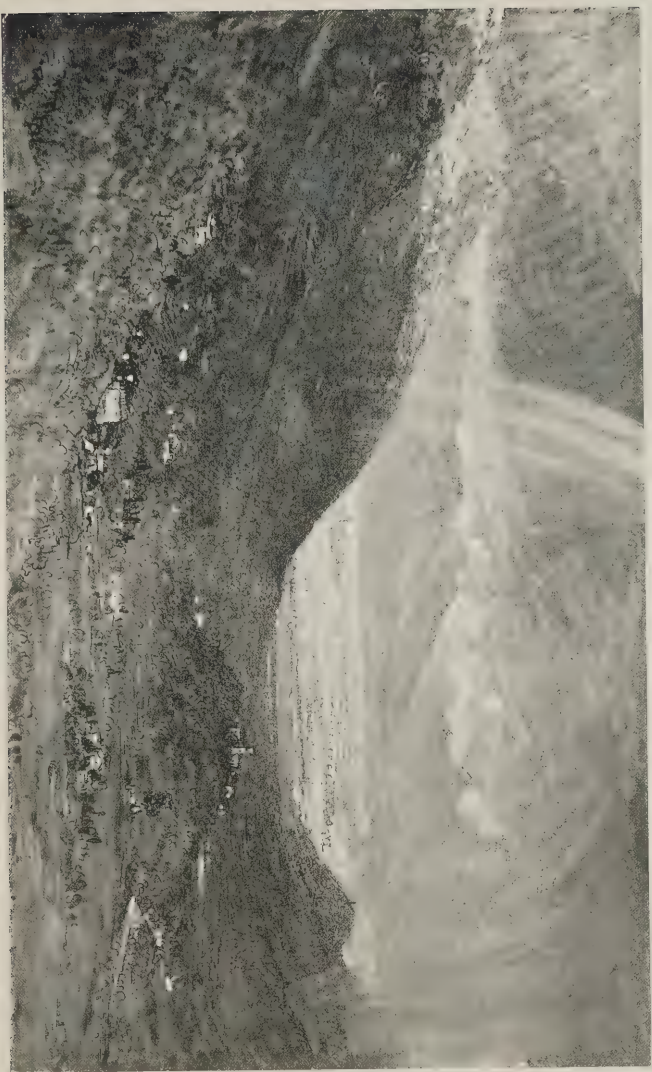
For a month, with an interval at Florence, he kept me pretty closely at work drawing *Ilaria*—side-face, full-face, three-quarters, every way ; together with bits of detail from the early thirteenth-century porch of St. Martin's and other churches, and some copies in the picture gallery. He painted hard himself, and never did better work in his life. Two studies, "half-imperial," of the façade of St. Martin's are especially well known ; one was at the Academy (winter 1901) and one at the same time at the Royal Water-colour Society's Exhibition. He used to sit in quaint attitudes on his camp-stool in the square, manipulating his drawing-board with one hand and his paint-brush with the other ; Baxter, his valet, holding the colour-box up for him to dip into, and a little crowd of chatterers looking on. He rather enjoyed an audience, and sometimes used to bring back odd gleanings of their remarks when he came in to luncheon. One ragged boy, personally conducting a friend from the country, was overheard enumerating the strangers' meals at the hotel : "They eat much, much, these English !" Of course, most in the crowd knew him, or about him. The dean and chapter came to

approve, the choir to grin, and the gendarmes to patronise ; a few French tourists hovered round, but no English that I remember.

After these long mornings of work—inside when it rained, outside when it shone—we always went for a ramble or a drive. One venturesome start in a thunderstorm I recollect, for Ruskin was not the least timid, as you might expect from his highly-strung temperament. He used to walk planks and look down precipices, too, like a regular steeple-jack, and handle all sorts of animals fearlessly. This thunderstorm gave us grand Turner-esque effects, of which I have a sketch, but no description ; but I have borrowed an old letter of the time which gives a fair sample of an afternoon with Ruskin. It is dated October 28, 1882.

“A biting scirocco was blowing, but we started in the usual carriage driven by the boy with the red tie. As we left the hotel an army of beggars hailed the Professor, who solemnly distributed pence, to lighten his pocket and his mind. Then we scampered through the streets, which are all pavement, and none broader than Hanway Street ; but everybody drives furiously in them as a point of Lucchese and Tuscan honour, and nobody seems to be run over.

“Out through the city walls you are in the country at once. Indeed, I can't help thinking of the town as a garden where houses are bedded out instead of flowers ; they are so close packed, so varied and pretty. But out at the gate it is a wide stretch of plain with mountains all round, and bright cottages, cadmium-yellow in the stubble-fields and cane-brakes, for they thatch the maize-heads over the roofs by way of storage. Out of one quite decent-looking farm-house a decent-looking woman came rushing and gesticulating after the carriage. The Professor called on the driver to stop ; and the woman, out of breath, declared she was the mother of five and wanted charity. He gave her a note ; notes, you know, can be a good deal less than five pounds in Italy.



THUNDERSTORM CLEARING, LUCCA



“At the foot of the hills, south of Lucca, we left the carriage and walked up the road; Baxter, too, with the umbrella, coat, camp-stool and geological hammer as usual. The road goes up through chestnuts and under vines, till you get to some farms and a church on the top of the buttress-hills, with a splendid view of Lucca and the valley, behind rich slopes of autumn colours, and a monastery with its cypresses in the middle distance. Then we dived into a valley and crossed a marble quarry, for all the stones here are marble; the road is mended with marble, and the pigstyes are built of marble; and then we scrambled up the main hill. There is a sort of track through chestnut and myrtle and arbutus with scarlet fruit against the sky. Girls were gathering chestnuts and arbutus berries—such a picture!

“So with an hour's scrambling we came out through a wood of stone pines to the top, a sort of marble platform. The scirocco had blown us up fine weather; the Carrara hills were clear, and the Apennines for miles; fantastic peaks, all sorts of gables, pyramids, cones, and domes. The sea was ridged and beating hard on the shore of the Maremma; the bay of Spezia in the distance, and little Lucca, tidy and square below, tucked into its four walls like a baby in a cot with a patchwork quilt. I stayed ten minutes to get a sketch, while the Professor and Baxter howked out a particularly contorted bit of marble, and then we plunged through the pines on the back of the ridge to get a view southward. This, you know, is the wood where Ugolino in Dante dreamed he was hunting when they had shut him up to starve in the Famine Tower at Pisa, and it deserves its fame. It is quite another world from the hot rich valleys below; among the trees there are fresh, English-looking meadows with daisies very big and very pink, and beyond—the wonderful Mediterranean coast, rose colour in the sunset. Pisa far down there showed every detail distinct, cathedral and leaning tower like toys; even at Leghorn we could see the ships in port. It was like looking on the world

from the angels' point of view ; a glimpse through the centuries.

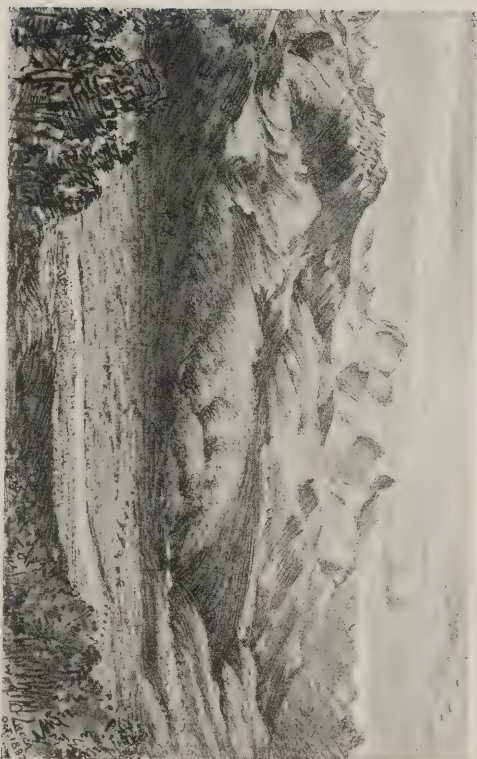
"But the sun was half-way below the sea, and we turned and raced the darkness down to the valley, along a path some six inches wide, with a marble precipice below and a clay bank above. Then the moon rose ; a regular conventional Italian moon, chequering the path like sunshine, lamping the cypresses and campaniles. Our driver was asleep ; we stirred him out and drove through misty by-roads to the town gates. Out came the Customs officer. 'Have you anything to declare, gentlemen ?' 'Nothing, sir !' 'Felice sera, signori !' 'A happy evening, sir !'

"The streets were very quiet though it was not late. By the Dominican convent, in the moonlight, there was a woman kissing the great crucifix ; few other folk about ; and we made the square ring again when we chased the moon into the plane-trees and rattled up to the hotel door."

One morning toward the end of October, soon before we left Lucca, I went to work on a last drawing of Ilaria (since honoured by Ruskin with a place in his Sheffield museum) and found the marble wet and fouled. Somebody had been taking a cast. After long days in the quiet cathedral, among so many haunting thoughts, studying the face, it had grown almost as alive to me as it always was to him. Even I felt a little shock. It was a liberty, somebody taking a cast ! At breakfast entered a not very prepossessing fellow carrying a plaster mask. Signor Ruskin had asked at the shop ; one was now made.

I never saw him more moved. In a storm of anger he left the room, crying out, "Send him away." Fortunately we had with us Henry R. Newman, the American artist, then working for Ruskin at Florence. He could do the talking to the disappointed, enraged Italian, and got rid of him—and a Napoleon of mine—after awhile. I was thankful to Newman for getting rid of the cast as well ; and when the coast was clear Ruskin looked in, rather apologetic after his outburst.





THE MARBLE MOUNTAINS OF CARRARA AND THE VALLEY OF THE  
SERCHIO FROM THE LUCCA HILLS





"I hope you didn't give the fellow anything," he said, and, of course, I was much too weak-minded to fight the case.

But I still think the object-lesson was well worth a Napoleon. That ghastly thing was not our Ilaria ; any cast is a hard, dead caricature if once you have really known the living, ancient marble. And the wrath of Ruskin laid his secret bare. Do you think he could have stirred the world with mere flourishes from the pen ? Falling in love was not too strong a word for the feeling that dictated, over Ilaria's marble portrait, his plea for sincerity in art : "If any of us, after staying for a time beside this tomb, could see, through his tears, one of the vain and unkind encumbrances of the grave, which, in these hollow and heartless days, feigned sorrow builds to foolish pride, he would, I believe, receive such a lesson of love as no coldness could refuse, no fatuity forget, and no insolence disobey."

To gather up the threads it may be worth while noting briefly the chief incidents in this Italian tour, with a few comments from Ruskin's unpublished diary, showing how rapidly pleasure and pain alternated in his moods.

On arrival, walking round the town, first to Ilaria and last to San Romano, he notes : "Found all. D. G." The next day he heard of the death of J. W. Bunney, who had done so much work for him at Venice, notably the large picture of St. Mark's now in the Sheffield museum. We often thought Ruskin did not feel these losses, and was a little hard when news came that old friends were gone. But under the apparent stoicism there was much real emotion ; indeed, some of his later attacks of mental illness followed such events. I do not say they were the only causes, but they contributed. In April 1887, the sudden death of Laurence Hilliard, on board ship in the *Ægean*, undoubtedly turned the balance, and intensified weakness and worry into illness of many months' duration. In this case he wrote : "A heavy warning to me, were warning needed. But I fear death too constantly, and feel it too fatally,

as it is." I think his fear of death was purely the dread of leaving his work undone, with some shrinking of the possible pain ; his sense of death was in the growing limitation of his powers, which he could only forget in the presence of beautiful landscape. Thus next day, on the Lucca mountains, he "sat long watching the soft sunlighted classic hills, plumed and downy with wood, the burning russet of fallen chestnuts for foreground, thinking how lovely the world was in its light, when given."

At Florence on Oct. 4 : "Hotel Gran Bretagna once more ; good dinner and flask of Aleatico. Nothing hurt of Ponte Vecchio or the rest." Next morning the pendulum swung the other way, partly, I am afraid, because he could not get me to be ecstatic about the Duomo, and I almost argued him into a good word for Bronzino's "Judith." Then, again, a drive to Bellosguardo and a beautiful walk made it all right again, and a visit to Fiesole in sunshine redeemed the character of the neighbourhood. But the great event was his introduction to Mrs. and Miss Francesca Alexander, brought about through Mr. Newman, and followed by a friendship which had a great and happy influence on his later life. Miss Alexander's beautiful handwriting, and the pathos of her manuscript "Story of Ida," and her pen-drawings to the "Roadside Songs of Tuscany," which he then and there bought for "St. George" and the world, were a great discovery, to him as if he had found "the famous stone which turneth all to gold."

Returning to Lucca on the 11th he worked with zeal and power on his drawings of the Duomo, and wrote his diary with animation. Here is a vignette from it : "Sat. 14th. Wet afternoon ; bought cheese and hunted for honey. Found the only view from ramparts in the evening. Tanneries and cotton-mills spoil the north-west side. Girls singing in a milly, cicadesque, incomprehensible manner. An old priest standing to hear them—thinking—I would give much to know what !"

During this October at Lucca he was visited by Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Robson ; Mr. Robson was then preparing (or intended by the authorities to prepare) plans for a museum at Sheffield, which should hold the collection belonging to the St. George's Guild. Mr. Charles Fairfax Murray also came to see him ; he, like Randal, Newman, Rooke, Alessandri and one or two others, was employed by Ruskin on drawings for this museum. From the 27th to the 29th he went alone to Florence, on a farewell visit to the Alexanders, returning to Lucca for a couple of days' work before going to Pisa, where he had asked Angelo Alessandri, the Venetian painter, and Giacomo Boni, the Venetian architect, to meet him. Signor Boni is now world-famous by his antiquarian work at Rome ; one sees his name in the papers, expounding the Forum to our king in the King's English, with a strange legend of his Oxford pupilship to Ruskin.

He and Signor Alessandri, however, were not strictly pupils of Ruskin, who had met them during the winter of 1876-77 at Venice, and, so to say, adopted them. At this second meeting he liked them and their work more than ever. His character of them is given in the first of his lectures on returning next year to Oxford : "Clever ones, yes ; but not cleverer than a great many of you ; eminent only, among the young people of the present day whom I chance to know, in being extremely old-fashioned ; and—don't be spiteful when I say so—but really they are, all the four of them—two lads and two lassies—quite provokingly good." The two lads were Boni and Alessandri, one of the lady artists was Miss Alexander. But it was a compliment to his audience to call them cleverer than Boni, whose great power already showed itself in his keen eye and square shoulders. Napoleon Bonaparte must have looked something like him, I thought, when he began to charm the fierce Republic ; but there the comparison ends. Ruskin set him to measure Pisa cathedral all over, to see why it was so irregular ; and for a little holiday one heavenly morning before

breakfast, Boni took me up the Baptistery, outside, even to the skirts of the great St. John on the top of the dome—all Pisa beneath, and the Maremma in sheaves of mist as if angels were haymaking, and the sea and the mountains bathed in blue atmosphere around.

These days of busy work and evenings of bright talk were too soon ended, and on November 10 we took our first stage northward and homeward.

VII

RUSKIN'S MAPS



## VII

### RUSKIN'S MAPS

READING the map is as great a pleasure to some people as reading a story-book. You will see them pore over the atlas for an hour together, going on dream-journeys. It is a cheap way of globe-trotting, and gets rid of the discomforts ; only one must have imagination to turn the wriggling hair-lines into vistas of river scenery, and the woolly-bear shading into forested crests and peaks against the sunset. It needs a good deal of imagination to get over the ugliness of most modern maps ; but why should maps be ugly ?

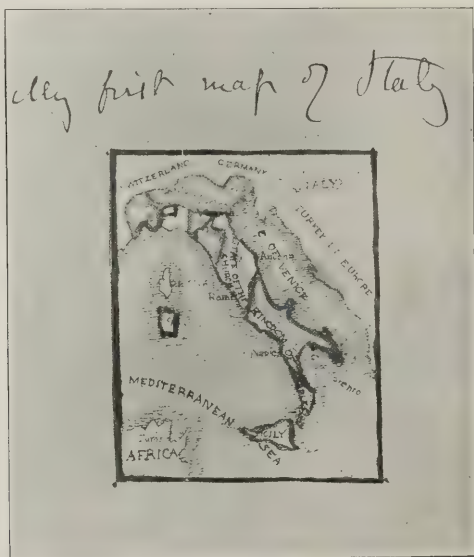
That is a question which Ruskin often asked, and he gave a great deal of trouble and time to the subject : not enough to carry out such a reformation as his energetic preaching and teaching did effect in some other things, but perhaps we have not quite come to the end of the story yet.

Anyway, the map-readers, and all who have known the bliss of owning a Bible with a " Palestine " for solace during sermon-time in childhood, or have realised the privileges of even Bradshaw's ugly chart on a long journey—all these will not think it strange to be told that Ruskin was a map-lover too, and that he was nearly as fond of plans as of pictures. Indeed, the old complaint against his art criticism was that he wanted pictures to be maps, decoratively coloured diagrams of nature, in which you could find your way about, know the points of



the compass, latitude, altitude, geology, botany, fauna, flora, and the universal gazetteer.

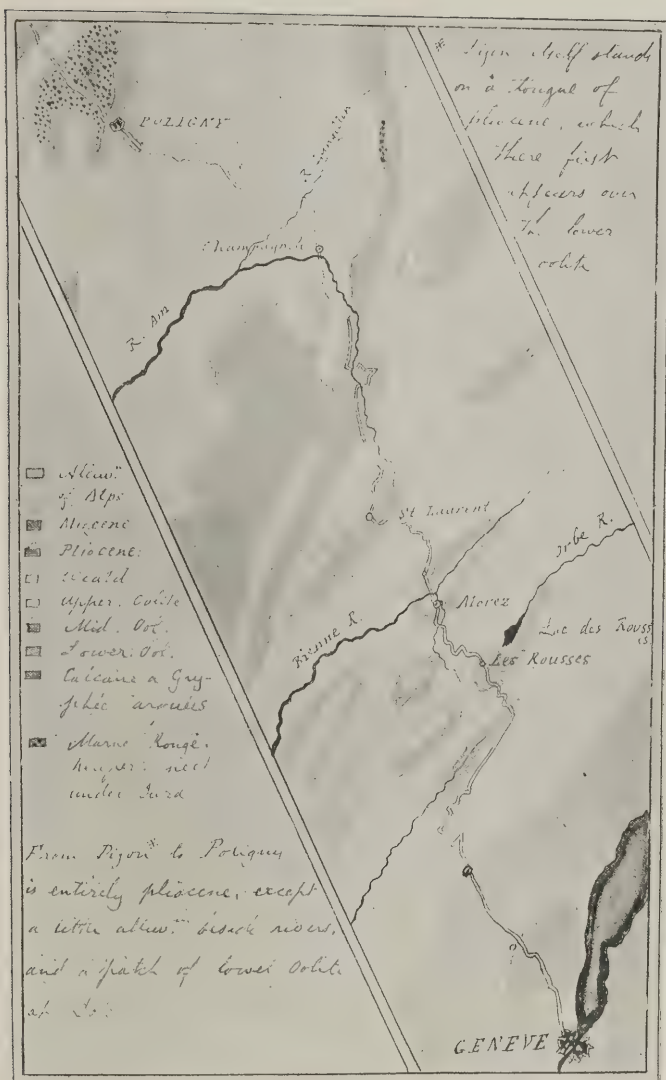
He says in the Notes on his Turner Exhibition that he began to learn drawing by copying maps, and only came to pictures later. It is a biographical fact that his first use of a



RUSKIN'S FIRST MAP OF ITALY

AT SEVEN OR EIGHT: SIZE OF THE ORIGINAL

paint-box was to tint seas blue—not skies ; and to ornament his outline with a good full red and green and yellow. Here is his first map of Italy, facsimiled from the coloured original. You see how he tried to be neat, and how he knew, without having to amend his lettering, to put one D and two R's in "MEDITERRANEAN." About Germany he was always antagonistic or inattentive ; here, you see, he thinks it is in Austria ! It is



# GEOLOGY ON THE OLD ROAD

BY JOHN RUSKIN



hardly possible that he was really copying when he made that characteristic blunder.

Why do we refer to these childishnesses? Because he—the art critic and art teacher—began his art career not by sketching people or cottages or flowers, but by copying maps; and because he ended his career in bidding his hearers do likewise. Of course the value of advice entirely depends upon what you mean to do with it. If you want to make colourable imitations of fashionable pictures, don't take Ruskin's word for anything. If you want to be a scholar in the school of the Old Masters, then you might do worse than listen to him. They “leant on a firm and determined outline”—that is Sir Joshua Reynolds; they started with painstaking draughtmanship, and added colour tint by tint; and so he says, “I place map-making first among the elementary exercises,” and so forth, and made his young pupils begin with simple facsimile—“If you can draw Italy you know something about form”—and then paint the globe with its conflicting shade and local colour. Afterwards, in setting one at Turner, he would say, “I want you to make a map of the subject. Get the masses outlined, and fill in the spaces with the main colours; and that will do.”

The next photograph is from a coloured drawing of the same size; the pale spaces are pink and yellow and green, and the Lake of Geneva, which looks rather blotchy in the print, is more pleasant in ultramarine. This is one of a set of geological maps made to illustrate the course of the usual tour through France and the Alps, perhaps, to judge by the handwriting, for the journey of 1835, when he made special preparations to study geology. He could hardly carry a bulky sheet or atlas, and so extracted just what he required, in a series of neat little pages, put together into a home-made case, ready for use at any moment. Youngsters who take this kind of trouble are likely to become men of weight; at least, they get to know how interesting the world is. Ruskin on a journey was never bored, unless he was ill; he looked out of window and poked

you up : " Now, put away that book ; we are just coming to the chalk " ; or, " Are you looking out for the great twist in the limestone ? " And the changes in the face of the country,



SKETCH OF SPAIN

BY JOHN RUSKIN

with new flowers and varying crops, were a continual entertainment.

Another use of maps to Ruskin was in writing the descriptive eloquence for which most readers chiefly admire him. I remember a very good judge of pictures and books once choosing the best passage of Ruskin—not that such "bests" come to much—and fixing on the bird's-eye-view passage in which he takes you with the stork and the swallow on their northward flight over the varying scenery of Europe ("Stones



PHYSICAL SKETCH OF SAVOY

By JOHN RUSKIN



of Venice," II., vi., § 8 ; "Selections," I., § 20). Now this has all the imaginative charm of Hans Christian Andersen's "Snow Queen," or George Macdonald's "At the Back of the North Wind"; but it is nothing more nor less than notes on the map of Europe—of course, by a map-lover.

To help in such work he collected maps wherever he went. He kept them in a special set of drawers in his study, some mounted on spent diagram-cards from his lectures, and some dropping to pieces with wear and tear. Among these are still his first map of the Lakes, from Jonathan Otley's or Wordsworth's Guide, and his old Keller's "Switzerland" of 1844, which he used forty years later, saying that he did not want the railways, and no new map showed the roads better. Of favourite towns, such as Venice and Amiens, there are large scale plans, the best that could be bought; and of some Swiss districts, like Neuchâtel, there is quite a library of cartology. A highly detailed map of Médoc, from a wine advertisement, was found useful; likewise Britain with the centres of Trinity College, London, which he kept for its clearness. Philip's "Authentic Map of England" is endorsed "good common use," and he even kept close at hand a set of children's dissecting maps. The Ordnance Survey is fully represented, but because too much was put into these beautiful six-inch sheets, he has coloured them fancifully and vigorously, to get clear divisions of important parts. Clearness and distinctness, every one must feel, are not the strong points of modern cartography, hence the use of sketch-maps: such as this of Spain, scribbled on a sheet of foolscap to keep him in mind of the graceful, swinging coastline and the proportions of the provinces.

The overloaded modern map is a work of reference—it is a dictionary, not a book. Ruskin felt that it was useless for educational or literary purposes, and he was continually trying to improve away the detail and to substitute graphic statistics. One line of this attempt was in the direction of models. Beck's raised map of Switzerland (1853) was often in use, but it was



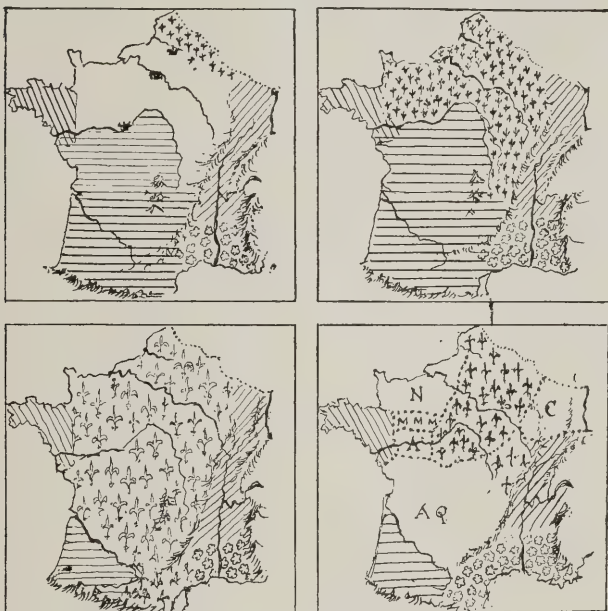
spoilt for him by the shining surface, which catches high lights and distracts the eye : all models ought to be painted in dead colours, except the water, which needs the shine for the sake of transparency.

So, in 1881, when he was working at the physical geology of the Coniston neighbourhood, he tried to make a model of the hills and dales, to see how the strike and dip of strata and the faults and dykes in the rock came out in relation to ups and downs, lake-basins and crags, and so forth. He found modelling too tedious to carry out himself, and, with characteristic oddness in his employment of means to ends, he set his gardener, the late Dawson Herdson, on the job. Herdson made a very fair general sketch in clay of the Old Man, and the main features as seen from the Coniston side ; but he had not pegged out his distances, and when Dow Crag was built up into emphatic gloom, and Leverswater hollowed into depth, the smaller heights had no space left for them, and the effect was altogether too willow-patterned. Then Ruskin put another of his employés to work, and after much labour the model now in the Coniston Museum was evolved.

This was intended to be photographed or engraved in a side-light, as one of a series of physical maps. Another was to have been Savoy, for which Ruskin made the sketch here shown. The black Lake of Geneva is dark blue in his drawing ; the valleys are green, and the mountains roughly knocked in with lamp-black and Chinese white, tinted over with yellow for limestone, pink for Mont Blanc protogine, and red for gneiss. Rough as the sketch is, you see the structure of the Alps, the lie of the land, at a glance. Towns, roads, and all the rest should be shown, he said, on separate plans.

Towards this purpose he collected bird's-eye views in great variety, from Maclure and Macdonald's lithograph of the Soudan, to quaint old panoramas, of which one—the mountains seen from the Buet—is quite like a William Blake design of Heaven and Hell, and fit to serve as a background to all the

mythologies. Also, for their pleasant picturesqueness, he liked the queer productions of ancient cartographers, such as Edmund Squib's funny map of China (1655), and a seventeenth-century production called "The New Map of Muscovy," and "The



THE HISTORY OF FRANCE

By JOHN RUSKIN

Course of the Great River Wolga," by A. Olearius; with pictures of Russian peasants along the banks, and the camels of "the Tartar who dwells on the plains of Thibet." Such maps have the charm of graphic expression; they don't pretend to be gazetteers, but they take you about the country with the entertainment of a traveller's tale.

They are decorative also; that was another appeal to

Ruskin. William Morris has shown in the illustrations to the Saga Library how maps can become picturesque designs, and this was much on the lines that Ruskin would have followed. He might not have inserted dragons of the deep, nor, as in Drayton's "Polyolbion," nymphs and shepherds on the hills and lakes, out of all proportion and possibility; but he thought a map could be far more explanatory and ornamental than the usual school atlas.

His attempt at a diagrammatic history of France, sketched on a page of note-paper, was engraved for "Our Fathers have Told Us"—his projected school history of the "Nice Things that have Happened." You see—and for lack of space I must leave it for your further insight—how he designed to show the roses of Provence and the lilies of France in this garden of Gaul, at one time feebly struggling, then blowing fully and freely spreading, then broken in upon by the wild beast of war; the lily bed trampled and ruined; Aquitaine wasted to blankness, and so forth. Worked out completely, an atlas of history on this plan might be as pretty as any picture-book. A child accustomed to such maps would have little trouble in remembering the outlines of national growth, and the whole tedious business of dates and uncouth names would be infinitely lightened. Perhaps, some day, Ruskin's hint will be taken, and his suggestions will bear fruit.

He never cared for worship and admiration, when they did not mean the understanding of his aims, and the carrying out of his work. He knew his gift was to irrigate, as he said—to suggest and stimulate. People called him an egoist; but how wise in its humility was the close of his preface to "Love's Meinie!"—"It has been throughout my trust, that if Death should write on these, 'What this man began to build, he was not able to finish,' God may also write on them, not in anger but in aid, 'A stronger than he cometh.'" And for much that he has left to do, no greater strength is needed, but only the glory of going on.

VIII

RUSKIN'S DRAWINGS



## VIII

### RUSKIN'S DRAWINGS

IN his introduction to the Catalogue of a Ruskin Exhibition at Boston, U.S.A., in 1879, Professor Charles Eliot Norton wrote a paragraph which, as the verdict of a severely discriminating—though friendly—critic, is worth reading more than once again. He said : “The character of this collection is unique. These drawings are not the work of an artist by profession ; there is not a ‘picture’ among them. They are the studies of one who, by patience and industry, by single-minded devotion to each special task, and by concentrated attention upon it, has trained an eye of exceptional keenness and penetration, and a hand of equally exceptional delicacy and firmness of touch, to be the responsive instruments of faculties of observation and perception such as have seldom been bestowed on artist or on poet. Few of these drawings were undertaken as an end in themselves, but most of them as means by which to acquire exact knowledge of the facts of nature, or to obtain the data from which to deduce a principle in art, or to preserve a record of the work of periods in which art gave better expression to the higher interests and motives of life than at the present day. These studies may consequently afford lessons to the proficients in art not less than to the fresh beginners. The beauty of some of them will be obvious to an untrained eye ; but no one may hope to appreciate them at their worth who will not, in a respectful and modest spirit, give time and patience to their study.”

In his childhood, long before he thought of drawing from Nature, he had learnt great neatness of hand by amusing himself with copying out his juvenile verses to look like print, by drawing maps and by making facsimiles of George Cruikshank's etchings in his "Grimm's Goblins." His father used to sketch a little in the pre-historic style, and was fond of pictures; but they never dreamed of making John an artist. At last, when he was thirteen, and his adopted sister, Mary, was taking drawing lessons at school with much satisfaction to the family, he, too, was allowed to "learn drawing." Mr. Runciman, his master, gave him "copies"—the old, bold pencil copies—which he tried to imitate in a kind of stipple, at first, but soon picked up the manner, and in a year, as we find from old letters, was talking like a book about perspective and composition, and going to begin painting "on grey paper, with a few of the simplest colours, in order to learn the effects of light and shade." Mr. Runciman must have been a good teacher, for this method of his, on grey paper with a few simple colours, to get light and shade, is exactly what John Ruskin learnt thoroughly after awhile, and taught energetically in his turn all his life. But Mr. Runciman could not bring him to paint in oil, and does not seem to have had much of a system; for one of John Ruskin's letters in verse to his father, written early in 1834, says:

"I cannot bear to paint in oil.  
 C. Fielding's tints alone for me!  
 The other costs me double toil,  
 And wants some fifty coats to be  
 Splashed on each spot successively."

In his later years he used to say that the practical reason why he never went on with oil painting was that he had to draw—and to keep his drawings—among books and papers, and oils were messy, and did not smell nice. But no doubt the real fact was that his drawings were mainly meant for book-

illustration, done for the engraver, and intended, on a small scale, to get as much form as possible. All his experiments in oil seem to have been suppressed; though his water-colour practice, especially in later times, was to use Chinese white, and often a good deal of it, very nearly as if it had been flake white.

After some feeble attempts by himself at sketching from Nature, in 1831 and 1832, he went abroad with his parents for the summer of 1833, and drew diligently. He had received for a birthday present the volume of Rogers's "Italy," with Turner's vignettes, and intended to make something like it, in a book of verses neatly copied out, with vignettes reproduced in fine pen-work from his sketches on the spot. Whenever the carriage stopped he would snatch a sketch, and whenever they put up for the night he would write up his poetical diary. Coming home, he began his great work, but school lessons interfered; not before he had half filled the blank book, and pasted in a number of neat and pretty vignettes, of which the best is *The Jungfrau from Lauterbrunnen*, reproduced in "The Poems of John Ruskin," on the same scale.

Meanwhile, he had come under the influence of Samuel Prout, whose work his father admired; and on the next tour, in 1835, Turner was forgotten in the attempt to be Prout. The drawings of this "great year," as he called it, when they are put in order, show a wonderful progress from the first stiff and timid studies, fresh from the attempt to copy Prout's lithographs, to a free and quite masterly adaptation of Prout's "line and dot" manner. By the time he reached the Oberland and Venice, he had "got his hand in," and the subject went down upon the paper with ease and decision, always abstracted and mannered, but with a feeling after style which was entirely Ruskin. Both in drawing and in writing, much as he talked of truth and simplicity, he was, first and foremost, the stylist: and through half his life the conscious imitator of other men's styles—Hooker or Carlyle, Prout or Turner. But there was always more of Ruskin than of his model; and even in those



juvenile essays, when style so completely overwhelms fact, as in some sketches at Venice or Innsbruck, there is a precocious completeness and charm, as in the art of youthful nations, early Greeks, pre-Norman English, or pre-Renaissance Italians.

The pen-drawings of this year have less interest, for they were made from the originals to illustrate another intended manuscript, and the life, of course, went out of them. Some of these pen-drawings, as well as some of the original and superior pencil-drawings, are published in facsimile in the "Poems" and "Poetry of Architecture" (large editions of 1891 and 1893). Other facsimiles are given in "Studies in Both Arts" and "Verona." The plates in these volumes very fairly represent Ruskin's handiwork at different periods, and are indispensable to any one who wishes to study it. Plates in "Modern Painters" and "Stones of Venice," nearly all by engravers *after* his work, do not represent it in the same authentic manner.

Before he had completed his new book he wanted more skill in colour, and took lessons from Copley Fielding, with no great result, except that the style which he had gained by practice abroad was lost in trying after new models. The sketches of his period as an Oxford undergraduate are comparatively tame and commonplace (1836-1839), though he did some neat bits for Mr. Loudon's wood engraver to spoil in the papers on "The Poetry of Architecture," in the *Architectural Magazine*, which were his first published writings on art.

In 1840 he broke down in health, after winning the Newdigate prize for poetry at Oxford, and before taking his degree. His parents went with him in the autumn to spend the winter abroad, as a cure for consumption. He did the best for himself, according to new lights on the subject of hygiene, by spending nearly all his time sketching in the open air. Through France to the Loire and Auvergne, round the Riviera to Pisa and Florence and Rome, we can trace him by

his drawings, made now on a new method. David Roberts had been showing his Syrian sketches, hard pencil on grey paper, with yellow lights in body colour, and the new style caught young Ruskin's attention before he started for his journey, so that he set out with the resolve of being Roberts now. The same decision of line shows itself on this much larger scale ; he always seems to know what he wants, and to get it without trouble ; though when one remembers that these half-imperial drawings were done by an ailing lad, supposed to be within danger of death, it is not a little remarkable to see in them such evidences of tenacity and pluck.

At the beginning of 1841 they moved on to Naples, and made excursions to Salerno, Amalfi and the neighbourhood, always with a drawing to bring back ; and when he was on his way home, through North Italy, he wrote triumphantly to a friend that he had "got forty-seven large and thirty-four small sketches."

But what he could do with the stimulus of travel he could not do again in the reaction after it was over. He was not quite well yet, and went to Leamington to be under a doctor, in dull lodgings, and without any mountains. Still he drew. By this time he had dropped David Roberts, and taken up Turner, whose art he had already thought of defending against the magazine critics. It was in these circumstances that he made the *Amboise*, from a sketch of the year before, and certain vignettes for engraving, which were published in "Friendship's Offering," with his poems. In the new Library edition, vol. ii., photographs from the original *Amboise*, and from the old engraving after it, are given, well worth comparing.

He was not naturally a colourist. In later life he found out for himself the ways and means of producing bits of very sweet opalescent colour, but at any time was capable of relapsing into gaudiness, in hours of fatigue or ill-health ; and throughout his earlier life he was much more at home in light

and shade, or in work with the point. It was not that he did not see and enjoy colour. To judge by his writings, one would think that he lived for it, almost : and the splendid passage in the first volume of "Modern Painters," so often quoted for its word-painting of colour, was written from his diary-notes on the way back from Naples in 1841. He made a drawing of the scene he described ; one would expect at least an attempt at "purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle" ; but it is merely washed with faint tints over an elaborate outline of the architecture.

So the passing mood in sickness, which had led him to try after Turnerian colour, left him in health, for the more attainable method of Turner's "*Liber Studiorum*," and he began, in 1842, to make this his own. A slight pencil blocking out, firm and emphatic quill-pen to represent the etched line, and brushwork in brown, rarely in black, sometimes with a little colour, over paper usually grey—this was after all the manner that suited him best, and very nearly what Mr. Runciman had talked about, ten years before. By degrees, year after year, the pen work became finer, and the colour more predominant ; the solid white, used at first for high lights, invaded the tints and gave a mystery to the outline, and in ten years more he had found out his central style, a manner quite his own, producing beautiful results but inimitable by engraving, whether the old style of steel-plate or the new style of photographic process. That style in turn developed into the delicate and often dainty water-colour painting of his later years—passing by the way through a phase in which the pencil took the place of the pen, useful for getting notes of architectural detail and mountain form—and never quite abandoned, though the pencil drawings of the later period became a distinct series, free and emphatic and suggestive, apart from the more laborious elaboration of his last paintings.

In 1845 he went alone, unaccompanied by parents and family, to Italy, and found adventures. He made the acquaint-

ance of the primitive masters at Lucca and Florence, and copied a little ; then to the Alps to look for Turner's subjects in the Alpine sketches of 1842, which had so taken his heart. Turner did not like it ; it was dangerous to have a writing young man looking behind the scenes of imaginative picture production ; but Ruskin found out Turner, and was all the more enthusiastic for the discovery. He drew the Pass of Faïdo, and saw what Turner had seen, and what he had invented, more wonderful than any transcript from Nature ; and afterwards filled half a volume with the endeavour to expound the same. Then, with his versatility of sympathy, he met J. D. Harding, who was not so much his teacher as a valued friend, and together they went to Venice. One sketch-book leaf of this time is particularly interesting—with a pen and tint drawing of a mill at Baveno on one side, and a slap-dash sunset on the other, almost Harding. These are photographed in the "Poems."

The drawings of 1846 were the first serious mountain studies, afterwards used for "Modern Painters," though many things intervened. Sickness at first, and the visit to Crossmount in the Highlands, recorded in some drawings, not his best ; and then "Seven Lamps of Architecture," for which he studied in Normandy in 1848, and etched the plates himself in soft ground—strong, sketchy plates which were thought a failure at the time, and re-engraved in a queer imitation of the originals by a professional engraver for the next edition. Then he set to work upon "Stones of Venice."

He had already some material, but most of the drawings were made in two winters, November 1849 to March 1850, and September 1851 to June 1852. Many of the best have been dispersed, some are in America, but enough remain to show what a busy time it was, and how much downright drawing went to the making of that book : how much *more* drawing, and of how much finer quality than one can guess at from reading the book. The large plates in "Examples of the

Architecture of Venice" were not only from his sketches, but from carefully prepared working drawings. For a mezzotint, like the *St. Mark's Portico* or the *Arch of Ca' Contarini Porta di Ferro*, he drew the outline separately for etching, and made another drawing with the tint for the completed engraving. To do a subject over again seemed no grievance with him, and there are many examples of his patience in trying the identical view in different aspects or lights, or even redrawing it from Nature without alteration, merely to get a result more to his mind. That the result was worth while in the end we need not stop to declare. "Stones of Venice" was a revelation to architects and the public, and for a long while exerted an enormous influence upon English taste. Suppose, for a moment, such a book had been written, with all the enthusiasm and learning in the world, by a man who could not draw !

The later volumes of "Modern Painters," which followed this, owed their success in great measure to the same cause. The engravings, beautiful as they are, hardly show the originals ; though from the book one knows that its author had dwelt upon the aspects of Nature with more than a tourist's glance, and that he had struggled with the problems of art with more than an amateur's attention. His Aiguilles and Matterhorns, his Aspen and his mossy stones, his repeated studies from Turner and the Old Masters, down to the enlargements from illuminated missals, all tell the same tale of passionate interest in the subject and penetrative insight into the situation. They are not, as Professor Norton says, pictures ; but incomplete as they are, there is in them an appeal to which most of those who love pictures will respond.

During the progress of "Modern Painters," Mr. Ruskin planned a "History of Swiss Towns," for which he spent several summers in gathering material. His drawings for this series were more full of detail, handled with extremest fineness in some parts and with great breadth, often carelessness, in others ; intended for completion and engraving when time should serve. But

this time never came. He was led into the interests in political and social economy which, in these later years, with a public tired of hearing about Ruskin and art, have given him a place among the prophets. He was led into further studies of the geology of scenery, lightly touched in "Modern Painters," and, during long residence in Savoy and Switzerland, drew Alps chiefly for their cleavages, and threw the drawings aside. He was led into botanical and mineral researches, and Egyptology and Greek coins, and other by-ways, always, however, drawing as he went, but drawing subjects less interesting to the general onlooker. But from this backwater he emerged into a new and more developed style which began to show results in 1866, on a long summer tour in the Oberland, when he made the sketch *On the Reuss below Lucerne*, in "Poetry of Architecture"—a combination of such breadth and delicacy as he had hardly attained before, and much fine work with the point.

Next year but one, 1868, his ancient love for French Gothic took him to Abbeville. There the new style had full scope in the delicate drawings of that date, a long way in advance of old "Seven Lamps" period: and the same kind of work was continued in the next year at Verona (May to September), a summer of very busy painting in the company of his two assistants, Mr. William Ward and the late Mr. J. W. Bunney.

The Abbeville drawings were shown in a semi-public manner at a little exhibition to illustrate his lecture on the "Flamboyant Architecture of the Valley of the Somme," at the Royal Institution, January 29, 1869; and the Verona drawings at a similar lecture at the same place on February 4, 1870. The catalogue of the latter is printed in "On the Old Road," vol. i., part 2, with twenty pieces marked as his own.

In this year he entered on his duties as Slade Professor at Oxford, and before long had established a drawing-school there, which took up a great part of his attention. Of this period is a sketch "Done with my pupils afield," and he used sometimes to draw in the school, and often to draw for the

school. A *Candle*, finely shaded, and various botanical studies, were meant as "copies" or as examples of the treatment he proposed to his students; and the catalogue of the Ruskin Drawing School at Oxford contains a very large number of items by himself, from the great *St. Catherine*, after Luini, to little memoranda of plant forms. Several of these examples of his hand have been engraved in Mr. E. T. Cook's "Studies in Ruskin."

In 1870 and 1872 he was again drawing at Venice. The elaborate beginning of the "Riva de' Schiavoni," and the effective *Rialto* (in the possession of Miss Hilliard, Coniston), done one morning before breakfast, are of the former year. In 1874, after a breakdown in health, he visited Assisi, Rome, and Sicily, and beside the notes of Mount Etna and Scylla he brought home a series of careful copies from parts of the Botticelli frescoes at the Sistine Chapel, and the fully realised, though not completed, *Glacier des Bossons*, a remarkable piece of landscape work. In 1876 he went again to Venice, this time chiefly to copy Carpaccio, though some of his best later views of canals and palaces bear that date, or the early part of 1877, for he stayed on until May of that year. *Casa Foscari* (in the possession of Mrs. Cunliffe, Ambleside) may be named as a characteristic example of his daring point of view, and success in giving the mass of building in steep perspective.

In 1878 an exhibition of his drawings by Turner was held at the Fine Art Society's Galleries in New Bond Street. During the show he was taken seriously ill, and while convalescent he amused himself by arranging a small collection of his own sketches to add to the exhibition. His catalogue and remarks are given in the later editions of "Notes on his Drawings by Turner," &c., 1878. Next year a number of his studies were shown in Boston, U.S.A., under the management of Professor Charles Eliot Norton, whose appreciative paragraph we have quoted.

It seemed as though his working life had come to an end



at the time, with that crisis of illness. A visit to Amiens in 1880, with Mr. Arthur Severn and Mr. Brabazon, gave him the subject for writing the "Bible of Amiens," but his sketches were less vigorous and full. But in 1882 he was ordered away again for rest; and, as forty years before, he took his rest—the best rest for a tired brain—in sketching. He gradually warmed to work; at Avallon, in Central France, he began with a few sketches of detail, but in Italy the ancient love of architecture took hold of him, and he drew the *Porch at Lucca* assiduously. His two chief drawings of this subject were shown in the next exhibition of the R.W.S., and one of them at the R.A. in 1901. He exhibited on many occasions at the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, having been elected an honorary member in 1873. He said at the time to a visitor—"Nothing ever pleased me more. I have always been abusing the artists, and now they have complimented me. They always said I couldn't draw, and it's very nice to think they give me credit for knowing something about art."

Later than this there is little to chronicle. Ill-health came down upon him, and his last drawings were done to amuse his friend of "Hortus Inclusus" in 1886, though he made a few pencil notes of Langdale Pikes and Calder Abbey in 1889.

After his death an exhibition of his sketches, with some personal relics and added examples of the art about which he had written, was held at Coniston in the summer of 1900. It attracted over 10,000 visitors to the village, and to many was a revelation of Ruskin in a new character, and of a kind of art which charmed in spite of all they had been accustomed to look for in pictures.

In January and February 1901, a similar exhibition was held at the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, London. Many of the drawings then shown, with a large series of engravings after his work, are on view in the Ruskin Museum at the Institute, Coniston; where, in 1903, the Fourth Annual Exhibition contained a further instalment of



Ruskin sketches not previously shown in public, giving examples of his great variety in subject and treatment, ranging from an early outline of Dover (1831), to sketches at Avallon and Cîteaux (1882; see above, pages 48-51); from geological studies of Alps to notes of lions and tigers at the Zoo, and the head of the Venus de' Medici, elaborately shaded; and from the carefully finished and daintily detailed pen and tint *Valley of Lauterbrunnen*, in which the lens is needed to make out tiny châteaux, smaller than a letter of this type, to large splashes of water-colour, one of which (on a sheet 42 by 23 inches in size) is identical in subject with the view by Laurence Hilliard given at page 33 of this volume.

One pair of sketches among these has a curious biographical interest. When Turner's *Sun of Venice Going out to Sea* was exhibited at the Academy (1843), Ruskin was greatly impressed with its wonderful colour and truth, but especially with the reflections and eddies of the calm water, on which he wrote a well-known page in "Modern Painters" (vol. i. p. 357). Accustomed to write from notes with pen and pencil, he forgot, or ignored, the rule forbidding visitors at the Exhibition to copy the pictures. These are the sketches he made, and for making them was expelled from the Exhibition.

IX

RUSKIN'S HAND



## IX

### RUSKIN'S HAND

It was only the other day that a friend showed me a bundle of old papers, saying, "Some of these are in his writing, but I don't know what to make of the rest." I turned them over and said, "Second volume of 'Modern Painters'; original manuscript!" He had just found them, rolled up in brown paper, in a cupboard, where they had been for years. My friend, who was intimate with Ruskin from his childhood, and of course knew the Professor's later handwriting well, hardly believed me; the difference between the early and later styles is so great.

There may be other letters and papers of Ruskin's in existence and unrecognised; not, perhaps, unprinted, but still of great value, even in hard cash. Correspondents who beg for a Ruskin autograph and a bit of his writing from those whom they suppose to have plenty, are often surprised to hear that others have been before them, and that now the only way is through the dealers at a guinea a page or more. He told me that he thought the manuscripts of his best-known works had been destroyed, and no doubt had forgotten that many of them had been given away to those who treasured them. Since his death a considerable part has been brought to light, but of the vast quantity of writing—notes, rough copies, fair copies, and letters, done in a busy life of sixty working years—there may be much more to find scattered through the world:

for Ruskin's hand, like Nuremberg's, goes through every land.

In 1881 a Mr. Atkinson was sent to Coniston to make a bust of Ruskin. With his usual good nature to every one who came personally into contact with him—the roughness was only that of his sharp pen—the Professor treated the unknown as his visitor, found him lodgings and a workshop, and a place at his table for a great while, during which the bust made but slow progress. One reason, perhaps, for Mr. Atkinson's difficulty was that Ruskin had just grown a beard, and the well-known face was no longer there to mould. "Can't you treat the beard early Greek fashion; I should like to be a Bearded Bacchus!" he said. In spite of the admitted failure, he gave further work to the sculptor in casting leaves and other detail "for St. George's Schools"—that visionary object on which so much labour and thought were spent; and this use of casts from natural leaves, I am told by Mr. E. Cooke, was really originated by Ruskin in the Working Men's College days, though now pretty widely known. Some of Mr. Atkinson's casts, I may add, are on view in the Coniston Museum. But the sculptor's chief personal wish was to get a mould of Ruskin's hand. He used to say that there was more in it than in his face; at least, it was the most characteristic feature, and representable in solid form, while the face, depending on the bright blue eye and changeful expression, evaded him as it evaded more celebrated sculptors. But Ruskin did not like being oiled and moulded, and though Mr. Atkinson made enticing demonstrations on less worthy fingers, till we were all up to our elbows in plaster of Paris, he never to my knowledge won his point.

"Such a funny hand," says Browning's lover, "it was like a claw!" Ruskin's was all finger-grip; long, strong talons, curiously delicate-skinned and refined in form, though not academically beautiful. Those whose personal acquaintance with him dated only from the later years never knew his hand,

for then it had lost its nervous strength ; and in cold weather—the greatest half of the year in the North—the hand suffered more than the head. But his palm, and especially the back of the hand, was tiny. When he rowed his boat he held the oars entirely in his fingers ; when he shook hands you felt the

Coniston water is about 6 miles long.  
It is a very fine lake. But there is  
only one mountain in its vicinity.  
Namely Conistone Old man about 2200  
feet high. But the higher part  
of the mountain was so concealed by  
mist that we could not distinguish  
its form. Lower & less celebrated moun-  
tains. This mountain contains several  
rich copper mines. We had some very  
fine char for dinner. This fish is found  
in only a few of the lakes in West  
moreland & Cumberland. The largest  
ever caught in Conistone but they are  
usually fine in Windermere. These  
we had were of a light salmon colour &  
tasted like salmon trout. All in all  
it was a good day. we enjoyed ourselves  
very much and about five o'clock we  
sailed on our return to the lakes.  
We returned home by the head  
of the lake at Ambleside.  
We had a very pleasant ride  
& enjoyed our tea exceedingly.

## CONISTON

WRITTEN BY JOHN RUSKIN AND MARY RICHARDSON, 1830

pressure of the fingers, not of the palm. In writing, he held the pen as we are taught to hold a drawing-pencil, and the long fingers gave much more play to the point than is usual in formed penmanship. Knowing that, it is not surprising to find that his writing varies, not only from one period to another, but with passing moods. Everybody shows some of this variety, but Ruskin's hand was as flexible and as impressionable as his whole being.

He had an odd way, down to the last, of "printing" an inscription on the fly-leaf of a book or on the mount of a drawing, in neat, square Roman type, inked between double lines ruled in pencil. Sometimes giving a present to a favoured visitor he would say, "Stay, I must write your name in it"; and you expected the well-known autograph cheque-signature, scribbled with a flourish. But no! Spectacles, and ruler, and pencil first; two carefully ruled lines, an eighth of an inch apart; then the cork-handled, fine steel pen, and laborious regularity of inscription; till the onlooking recipient laughed outright at all this time and trouble spent on a trifle. But Ruskin was quite grave about it.

This was a reversion to early habits. His juvenile MSS., of which many were kept by his parents and still remain at Brantwood, contain many pages of similar calligraphy. His first Latin and French declensions are printed in pencil; at the age of seven he wrote the first copies of his "Harry and Lucy" in this way, pencilled first and penned over, thinking he was an author making a book. Many children do, but not with his tenacity and taste. In 1828 (age nine) he had brought this self-imposed education to something like perfection with the tiny "print" of "Eudokia," page after page showing wonderful steadiness of hand and eye; and at the end of that year he executed the masterpiece of childish ingenuity which he described in the autobiographical "Harry and Lucy"—the poem in "double print," all the down-strokes doubled: "And it was most beautifully done, you may be sure," says the saucy infant, not untruly. Some of his early mineral catalogues, begun at this time, appear to have been continued later, though the difference can hardly be told from any improvement in the penmanship.

Meanwhile his ordinary running hand was a shocking scribble, but in the middle of it he seems to have pulled himself up continually, or he was pulled up by an overlooking mother, and the wild scrawl becomes tidy and neat. I suspect that his earlier home lessons did not include much copybook work.

Conversation supplied to R. Field  
Mr. A. M<sup>r</sup> D. Child & Charles R  
in New-York. manuscript  
1836.

What a time, nearly now

Mr R. (Bainbridge) been a long time near

Mr R. what a wind from behind

where can't have kind till now

to me but it

for the

for the

Mr R.





He developed his own writing like other precocious boys and girls, though there is some trace of teaching at the very start But after 1830 he exchanged, perhaps at the instance of superior

yellow parchment is far better than a parchment in the entire  
mediate space. The latter indeed is never attainable.  
(This custom, though sanctioned by authority, but very little  
apology is offered for itself based on any principle of  
composition. In strict effect, indeed, it is occasionally  
accepted, and when the form is not broken by  
mismanagement, it may be used even in the detached Eliza-  
bethan - but not when decoration has been permitted  
below they should, &c.) except when the building has  
some appearance of having been intended for defence -  
and therefore is generally to be considered as barbarous  
in the style of building. While the yellow parchment  
admits of great variety of effect.  
Lastly, though the grotesque of Elizabethan  
architecture is adapted for wood country, the grotesque  
of the clipped garden, which frequently accompanies  
it, is not. The custom of clipping trees into  
fantastic forms is always to be reprehended, first  
because it never can produce the true grotesque, because  
the material is not plastic - & therefore there is a per-  
petual sense of restraint, while the great principle  
of the grotesque is action - secondly because we  
have a distinct perception of two natures, the one  
neutralizing the other - for the vegetable organization  
is too palpable to let the animal form suggest its  
proper idea - & thirdly, because the hands of the  
gardener cannot ever be capable of producing anything  
really spirited or graceful. In the great growth of the  
tree and bushy - because the great beauty of all  
nature is the energy of life and action, which is lost  
in such it is depressed by formal clipping.  
It is true however, need not be said, on this point  
for the taste of the public, both not to give pre-  
ference to such pictures of fair garden - & we should  
be sorry to let the same tasteless artists of the school of

RUSKIN'S HANDWRITING IN 1837

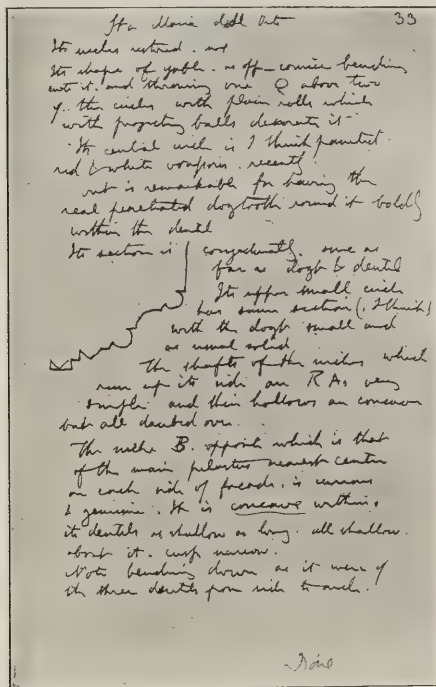
orders, his "print" for copperplate; the "Ileriad" (1831) is fair-copied in a large, regular round-hand, and the Tour poems of 1833 are in a smaller, less anxious, but more formed business style. One sees the father's influence coming in, and all his letters to the old-fashioned business man show the obvious

desire to please. "My dear papa" is flourished around in the most approved writing-master's manner, and "John Ruskin" at the end is in black letter, finishing a sheet of impeccable commercial-hand, in which the free-and-easy wording contrasts quite ludicrously with the formal writing.

It was only, or chiefly, to his father that such letters were written. For his mother he had another hand; for his friends and for himself an assortment of varying scribbles. But there, I think, comes out one of the leading points in his character. To be a man of strong thought and will, innovator in art, science, politics, morality, and religion, there never was such a chameleon, always ready to colour his mind after his surroundings; all things to all men. To the opponent he was an opponent; to the admirer an admirer, without at once testing the sincerity of the admiration or the source of the opposition. It was the cause of many regretted incidents in public life, but in private life the ground of his charm. Nobody who approached him in kindness failed of being met more than half way, while impertinence and rudeness, however unintended, struck a discord at once. So much of a chameleon he was, that he could persuade himself into liking, for the moment, and for the sake of his companion on the spot, many a thing he had denounced or derided; and sometimes he could do curious things out of the same unrecognised sympathy. Once after a lecture, leading Taglioni to her carriage in the midst of a crowd of onlookers, I saw him cross the London pavement with an old-world minuet-step, hardly conscious, I am sure, of the quaint homage he was paying to the great dancer he had admired in his boyhood.

Those flourishes of the pen for his father's pleasure never appear in his own private scribble. His ideas came too quickly to leave him time for ornament, and he had no need to idle in dots and circles between the phrases. His spelling was always good, but he never stopped to punctuate; a dash was enough for most kinds of stops. Letters of 1845 and 1852 are curious

for the underlining or interlining of long passages, not, apparently, for emphasis; possibly to mark sections of these general epistles home for copying. In all this early writing there is an



NOTES FOR "STONES OF VENICE"

By JOHN RUSKIN (ABOUT 1850)

effort to keep pace with the flow of thoughts, even in the verse; he wrote so much that mere economy of time must have driven him at speed to the shortest way of getting the matter down. In diaries of the period are some shorthand notes which I take to be his; but if he ever tried shorthand he dropped it soon.

The model upon which Ruskin's usual handwriting was at last formed was his mother's. It is perhaps a commonplace to say that we all betray in our writing the greatest personal influence of our earlier years. While penning this very page, a letter has just been brought to me which at first glance put me in mind of a friend long since dead : it is from his school-master. Not Ruskin's father nor any of his teachers appear to have influenced him like his mother. Her more deliberate writing was extremely elegant ; rather small, moderately sloping, with a pretty combination of curve and angle, and capitals carefully formed. In the note-book in which he composed verses from 1831 to 1838 you can see the development of his hand from a spiky and cramped boyish scribble to the more open and slightly more upright style of 1835 and 1836, the year of his matriculation at Oxford ; a neat and educated penmanship, easy to read and regular, though differing slightly from day to day in size and slope. The backward switch of his *y* and forward toss of the tail to his angular *t* are already there ; and the dainty shaping of capitals, based on Italic or Elzevir print, like his mother's, with suggestion of the *serif* in a little elegant curl to *H* and *F*. Instead of spasmodic reform, as earlier, there is perfect steadiness for page after page.

At Oxford his writing became rather larger and looser, perhaps from Latin exercises, in which indubitable distinctness is required. The "Poetry of Architecture" fair copy can be seen in a facsimile in the new Library Edition ; the draft scribbled in a sketch-book during Oxford vacation is reproduced (p. 141) ; you note the tendency to round the foot of the down-stroke and the length of the greater limbs of the letters. He used to tell his secretary to take no notice of a letter in which *h* and *l* looked like *n* and *e*.

Leaving Oxford and writing hard at "Modern Painters" earlier volumes, which cost a great deal of pen-work, he went back to the smaller hand of voluminous authors, and the

constant attention to one subject gave it regularity. But the letters of the time are naturally more impulsive; indeed, in 1849 there are bits which prefigure his latest style in its upright and loose sketchiness. From 1849 or 1850 for some years the chief work was "Stones of Venice," and the note-books and studies for this are fairly represented by the page on "Sta. Maria dell' Orto." This is the earlier "Modern Painters" manner. You see the growing freedom, but it is not yet wild and whirling.

The difference is shown at a glance in comparing this with

*Ever affectionately and gratefully Yours*  
*W. R. R.*  
*With a kind note*  
*this, I perceive. I really am doing lots*  
*of work but the paper needs to me to*  
*be in good humour.*

RUSKIN'S HANDWRITING IN 1875

the sample of his well-known later hand. It was by the end of the 'fifties that the regular and tight spikiness began finally to disappear and give place to far-flung curves. The great turn in his life which took place about 1860 showed itself in his penmanship as well as in his thought, and the final style became formed, which, with merely the differences of better or worse, lasted until all writing was over. After the summer of 1889 it was at very rare intervals that he took pen in hand. For some time before his death by mere disuse he seemed to have lost the very power of writing at all. At last, one day, being asked for his signature, he set down with shaking fingers the first few letters of it, and broke off with "Dear me! I seem to have forgotten how to write my own name!" And he wrote no more.

There have been authors and journalists whose printed

work, no doubt, exceeds his in quantity ; but in reckoning the sum total of his penmanship we must not forget that every printed page meant, for him, several written pages, especially in earlier books ; also, that he was a conscientious correspondent, and every day wrote many letters. It may be set off against this that he sometimes used the help of an amanuensis, though he rarely dictated, and it was only when he had hammered his subject into shape that he had it copied for the printer. Occasionally in late years he let it be type-written, but most of his work was done before the age of type-writers. He would use the most unlikely copyists, as when he got the little girls of his Brantwood class to write out his notes. All he asked was a distinct hand and a docile scribe. His secretary, like the secretary in "Gil Blas," did everything but write, and sometimes was packing parcels or sweeping leaves while the valet was copying lectures on Greek art. Some early MSS. are in the hand of George Hobbs ; many of the later were written by Crawley ; none by Baxter. At other times he requisitioned the young ladies ; it was for this that Mrs. Severn formed her large, round, upright hand, and Miss Anderson had many a copying task, as well as others whose work will be valued by collectors for its corrections from the master's pen, like the quartz which holds the sparkle of gold.

But he taught them to write distinctly—that was his great requirement. Once, on a sleepless night, he called me, with many apologies, to write from dictation. Naturally I wrote fast to get my job done and return to my slumbers ; but he continually pulled me up with, "I'm sure you're scribbling. Let me see if I can read it." Out on the fells, taking the dip and strike of strata, or among the cathedrals making notes and measurements, he would often warn his assistant of the folly of hasty scrawling. "I've lost so much time and trouble by my now bad writing," he used to say.

It has been told already how he was struck at first by Miss Francesca Alexander's handwriting before he had seen her

drawing, which afterwards he praised so highly. The distinct neatness of her beautiful calligraphy appealed to his love for missals and the lost art, as he feared, of the true scribe. But of queer and quaint writing he was impatient. Words were to be read, not played with in decorative affectations. The baser sort of business-hand roused him to scorn, and he had a sharp eye for the characteristics of a cranky or insincere correspondent. When postcards came in, like many others he did not approve of them and never used them. One of his household sometimes got postcards written in Runes, and, seeing the mystic inscriptions, he wanted to know why. "So that people may not read it," was the answer. "What's the use of that?" replied Ruskin. "Isn't language given you to conceal your thoughts?"

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[For further illustrations of his handwriting, see his earliest "printing" at seven or eight, with his latest current style, actual size, on page 108 ; a pencil scribble at ten or eleven, page 171 ; his neater writing of the same period, on page 199 ; his ordinary careful penmanship about 1835, on page 109 ; and his looser final hand, pages 163 and 174.]





X

RUSKIN'S MUSIC



## RUSKIN'S MUSIC

"IT is well known," says a recent newspaper writer, "that Ruskin's ear was as deaf to musical sound as his eye was sensitive to natural beauty." On the other hand, Miss Wakefield, the celebrated singer and the originator of country Musical Competitions, has put together a volume of 158 pages—most of them, certainly, in rather big type—under the title of "Ruskin on Music." The inference, of course, to an unbelieving world is that he wrote about what he did not understand. But Miss Wakefield understands; and she says, "what is to be admired in what he has said of the art is the beautiful way in which its spiritual meaning and teaching have been expressed by him, in the short passages which he has devoted to it, and in which no one has ever excelled him."

For his thoughts on music there is that book to read; but for Ruskin's quest of music, for his lifelong attempts to qualify as a musician, there is nothing to show. The story has not yet been told, because it has little bearing on his life's main work, and—to put it roughly—it is the story of a failure. Perhaps there are admirers who would rather not know about the failure; and yet—you shall judge when you have heard it!

There are still in existence the bound volumes of piano-pieces and operatic songs which he learnt when he was an undergraduate at Oxford. One of these volumes is open on the piano, in our photograph of the Brantwood drawing-room,

arranged as it used to be when he strummed a little before dinner and read at the four candles after dinner. Each piece is inscribed by the Oxford music-master with the usual vague respect of Town to Gown in the formula, "— Ruskin, Esq., Ch.Ch." The master does not seem to have known his Christian name, but he evidently dragged him through a great deal of Bellini, and Donizetti, and Mozart ; and "forty years on—shorter in wind, though in memory long" Ruskin had a keen recollection of these pieces, and liked to go over them with any young friend, showing how they used to sing "*Non più andrai*" or "*Prendero quel brunettino*," with all the flourishes. There are his fingering exercises, as elaborately annotated as all his old books are ; he must have spent much time and taken great pains, in those early days, over his music. It was not for want of opportunity, nor for lack of intention, that he did not become a musician.

When he left Oxford he still continued his lessons, especially the singing. I have never heard of his singing in company, but I can hardly doubt that the lessons did much for his voice. Any one who has heard him lecture, or read, or even talk, knows how resonant and flexible it was, and how thoroughly under his command. He had naturally a weak chest ; he caught cold easily, and his throat was often affected ; but he always, I think, was able to lecture, and his voice was the first thing that attracted an audience. The singing lessons were not without result.

In later years his music-master was George Frederick West, who taught him—or tried to teach him—something of composition. I can remember Mr. West coming to give him a lesson at Herne Hill, but I don't think I was ever present at the ordeal. You can imagine that "Dr. Ruskin," as Mr. West always called him, was a most difficult pupil, wanting at every turn to know why ; incredulous of the best authority ; impatient of the compromises and conventions, the "*wohltemperirtes Klavier*" ; and eager to upset everything and start



*(Photograph by A. E. Brickhill)*

RUSKIN'S PIANO IN BRANTWOOD DRAWING-ROOM

*(BEFORE RECENT ALTERATIONS)*



afresh. It is Mrs. Severn who can describe these droll interviews and Mr. West's despairing appeal, "But you wouldn't be ungrammatical, Doctor Ruskin?"

I am not so sure about that; but Mr. Ruskin learnt what he wanted. One thing he could do to perfection. He could easily and readily transpose and copy a song that was too high or too low, and he liked doing so. It does not imply great scholarship, but it is wonderful, as Dr. Johnson said of the performing dog, that he should do it at all. He might have been spending his time to better purpose, you think?

Music lessons went on, at all available intervals, down to the close of his active life. At Sandgate in 1887-88 he was learning from Mr. Roberts. In his lodgings, besides the cottage piano already there, he got a grand piano and a harmonium (the last was afterwards given to a chapel in Coniston), and because he had few chances of hearing music in that retirement, he engaged a young lady professional to play of evenings to himself and the friends who were staying with him.

In his books there are several hard hits at concerts and concert-goers; but just as he wrote against railways and yet, he said, "used them himself, few people more," so he was an energetic concert-goer. On arriving at Paris or any great foreign town his first question was, "What about the opera?" With classical Italian opera he was familiar from his youth up. He loved it, indignant when pestilent modernism hurried the tempo or took liberties with the well-known score. In London he usually had a season ticket for the Crystal Palace concerts—you remember how he abused the Crystal Palace!—and when he was driven away by the "autumn cleaning," a great business in old Mrs. Ruskin's scrupulous housekeeping at Denmark Hill, he would stay at the Queen's Hotel in Norwood, "to be near the Manns concerts."

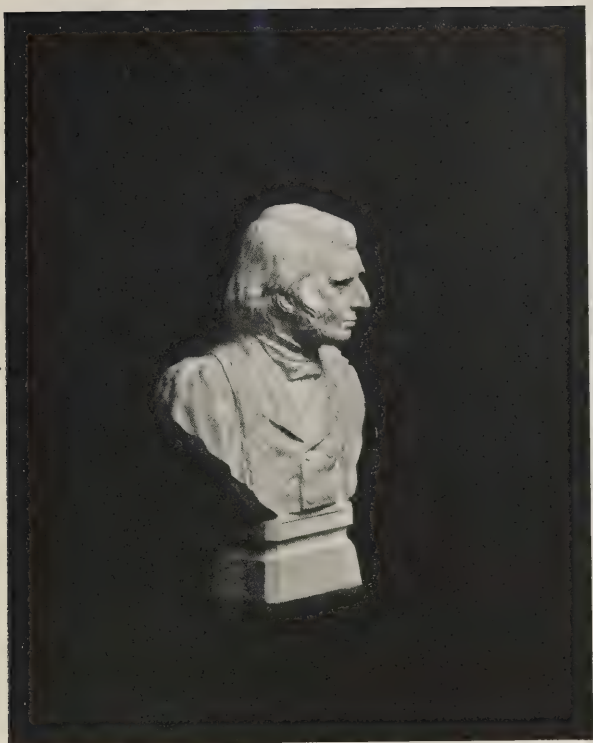
He has just mentioned Charles Hallé in "Ethics of the Dust," but in private letters comes out his real admiration of



the great pianist. John Hullah was one of his friends ; his copy of Hullah's "Manual" is scribbled with devices for simplifying the teaching of the keyboard. Indeed, being as he was a born teacher, and counting as he did music an essential to education, he even taught—or tried to teach—what he knew of it whenever there was a chance. That class of little country girls at Brantwood had to learn music too ; it was in his time of failing strength, and the story is tragi-comic ; but in such times the real heart reveals itself through all weaknesses, and it was a very kindly and earnest nature that made him write out neat cards of music-lore reduced to its lowest terms for the cottage lasses whose lives he tried to raise and brighten.

It was only on evenings of actual illness or serious trouble that he passed the time without music, and he generally managed to have somebody in the house who could play and sing. One of his admirations was "Claribel" (Mrs. Barnard), whom he met at Jean Ingelow's ; she sang her own songs to his great delight. Later, among many, there were the Misses Bateman and Miss Wakefield ; in "Joanna's Care" he has told his readers about the charm of Mrs. Severn's singing. And it was not only comic songs and nigger ballads that he would listen to ; he liked fun, as his readers ought to know by now, and a good funny song, if the tune was sound, made him clap his hands in a quaint gesture and laugh all over—the more that there was much sadness in his thoughts. I remember Sir Edward Burne-Jones's account of a visit to the Christy Minstrels ; how the Professor dragged him there, to a front seat, and those burnt-corked people anticked and shouted, and Burne-Jones wanted to go, and Ruskin wouldn't, but sat laughing through the whole performance as if he loved it. An afternoon, to him, of oblivion to the cares of life ; an odd experience ; but he would not call it music. "Now let us have something different," he used to say when he had laughed enough.

The old songs were his delight, old English and French



*(Miss Hargreaves, photographer)*

JOHN RUSKIN IN THE SEVENTIES

FROM A BUST BY PROFESSOR B. CRESWICK



and Scotch. German songs, German music, and everything German, except Dürer and Holbein, he could not abide; German love-songs especially, "songs of seduction," he called them. He would just endure a bit of Swiss carolling, with its breezy reminder of the Alps; but the unlucky individual who tried him with Fesca has cause to remember the event. Haydn and Mozart he classed with the Italians, and Handel with the good old standards; but Mendelssohn was not to be named. Worst of all he disliked execution without feeling: the brilliant young lady pianist had no welcome from Ruskin. Gaiety, or else tenderness, appealed; even among the old songs there were those he cast out of the programme. Of "Charmante Gabrielle" he said once, "it might do when a king sang it."

Corelli was one of his favourite composers; that was another link with "Redgauntlet" and Wandering Willie; and though he was never a collector of rarities as such, he bought all the Corelli he could meet with, as well as various old editions of early music at Chappell's sales.

From about 1880 for some years he took to making little compositions of his own; curious experiments. It need hardly be said, and it need never be regretted, that these were not workmanlike performances. The mere fact of his trying to compose is curious; and though it is not part of his life's work, it explains some passages and turns of his thought. It would be really more wonderful if he had succeeded in learning to be a musician, along with all the other things he attempted. But look at his face, in the truthful if not sentimental portrait by Mr. Creswick. I do not much believe in physiognomy, and yet in the faces of those who have the gift of execution—quite a separate power from intellectual or emotional appreciation, or even from composition—I think you notice that the groove which marks off the wing of the nose, *ala nasi*, at the top is strongly developed; sometimes it is so sharp as to be almost a deformity. There is none in Ruskin's face. That trait may mean nothing; but the

# AT MARMION'S GRAVE

WORDS BY SIR WALTER SCOTT

AIR BY JOHN RUSKIN, 1881

VOICE. *Andantino tranquillo.*

PIANO. *Andantino tranquillo.*

*p*

But yet from out the lit - tle hill

Ooz - es the slen - der spring - let still, And

shep - herd boys re - pair To seek the wa - ter -

- flag and rush, And plait their gar - lands fair;

When thou shalt find the lit - tle hill

*mf*

With thy heart com - mune, and be still.

*rit.*

*colla voce.* *rit.*

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

fact remains that so able a man spent time and labour in vain over an art which many learn easily, without a hundredth part of his general power. In a word, he had a great love for music, and within certain limits a true taste, but no talent.

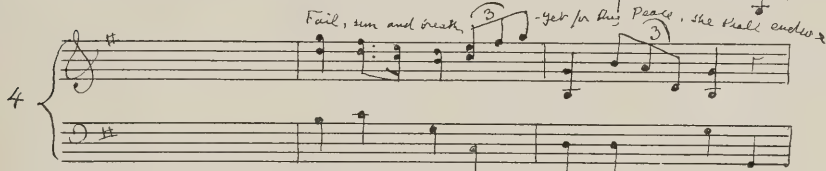
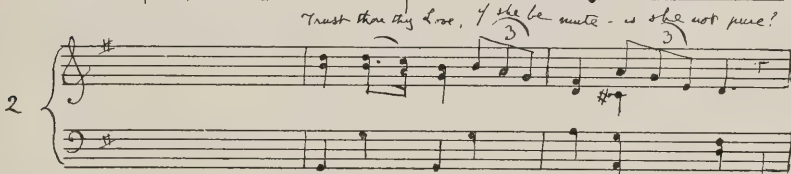
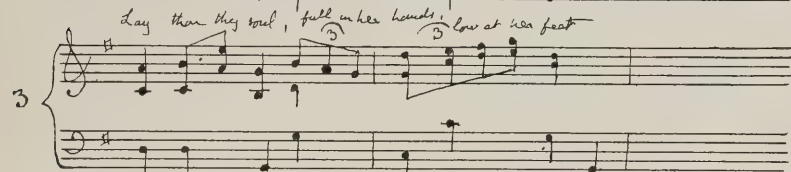
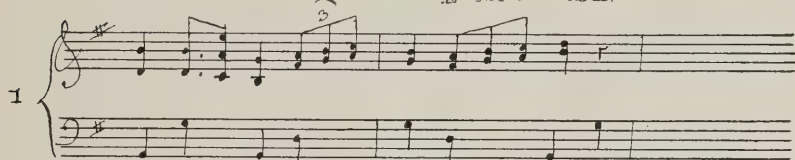
There were, however, friends of his who could find his little tunes interesting and enjoyable, and even pay him pretty compliments about them. Without attaching too much importance to it, I venture to quote part of a letter from Ernest Chesneau (author of "The English School of Painting") to John Ruskin, dated "Oxford, 12 juin, 1884, 8<sup>h</sup>.  $\frac{1}{2}$  a.m."

"Hier à 5 heures, nous sommes allés réclamer à miss Macdonald junior la chanson de notre John. L'aimable enfant n'a pas eu le temps encore de l'écrire et me l'a promise pour demain ; mais pour me consoler de ma déception, que son fin regard de fillette a bien lue sur mon visage, elle m'en a chanté une autre ; et je lui ai fait redire la première. En écoutant ces doux petits airs simples, naïfs et touchants, ma mémoire évoquait—sans que ma volonté y eût part—le souvenir d'une grande fugue du vieux Bach que l'orgue de New College avait fort bien joué la veille. Et ma pensée inconsciemment associait, rapprochait la magnificence du Bach et la timide délicatesse du Ruskin. Et la douce petite chanson m'apparaissait comme ces exquis graminées dont la graine, apportée par les oiseaux du ciel, fleurit aux frontons de marbre des palais ou aux corniches de pierre des cathédrales. Et la fleurette apportée des champs voisins se perpétuera à travers les âges, quand les somptuosités créées de main d'homme ne seront plus que des ruines où s'arrêtera le regard curieux de l'artiste. C'est que la petite fleur des champs et la naïve chanson expriment l'âme des simples ; et que la fugue comme le temple ou le palais expriment les raffinements des scholastiques, c'est à dire l'éphémère de l'art."

In "Elements of English Prosody," written 1880, there is a good deal about his views on music, made sadly unreadable, not by the error of his ideas, but by his perverse neglect of

recognised technicalities. Among the rest is an attempt at a setting of "Ye Mariners of England," with bars inserted as

*Trust thou thy Love, if she be proud,  
is she not sweet?*



"TRUST THOU THY LOVE"

FACSIMILE OF MUSIC BY JOHN RUSKIN

if to mark the feet of the prosody instead of the beat of the melody, which was part of his scheme, though it naturally offends a musician.

His little output of musical composition need never see the light. Once he had "Blow, blow thou winter wind" set up



in type, but it was discreetly blotted. The manuscript page of "On Old Ægina's Rocks" is in the Coniston Museum for the curious to behold. Others were little rhymes for children—the words printed in his "Poems," or fragments from Scott and Shakespeare, "How should I thy truelove know," "From Wigton to the foot of Ayr," "Come unto these yellow sands," "From the east to western Ind," and so forth, with a couple of odes of Horace, "Faune, Nympharum," and "Tu ne quæsieris." Here, as specimens, it is enough to give a little scrap from "Marmion," to which he set the air and sketched the accompaniment; and his own rough draft of a songlet, of which the words, at any rate, are lovely, and intimately Ruskin. They might be the motto to the Queen's Gardens of "Sesame":

Trust thou thy Love ; if she be proud, is she not sweet ?

Trust thou thy Love ; if she be mute, is she not pure ?

Lay thou thy soul full in her hands, low at her feet ;

Fail, Sun and Breath ;—yet, for thy peace, she shall endure !

XI

RUSKIN'S JEWELS



## RUSKIN'S JEWELS

A *STANDING* treat for Ruskin's visitors was to look at minerals. Some people, it was known, did not appreciate Turners, but everybody was sure to show emotion over the diamonds and nuggets. It was not an ordinary collection, with a bit of this and a bit of that, samples of all the ores in the handbook; there were only certain sorts, but each specimen was the pick of the market and of many years' selection, and every sort was a type of beauty.

Ruskin was not a "scientific" mineralogist, though he was an F.G.S. from an early age, and used the word "science" pretty freely in his writings. He really knew a great deal about minerals, too; but his knowledge was that of the artist and collector, taking little notice of the mathematics and chemistry which you read about, yet finding deep and keen interest in the forms and colours, the development, the "Life of Stones," "Ethics of the Dust," as he put it, about which science, up to his time, had nothing to say. And yet, as he showed his collection, you could not but feel that this was a kind of Nature-study not only fascinating, but of real importance.

A standard work, under the heading, "Native Gold," tells us: "The octahedron and dodecahedron are the most common forms. Crystals sometimes acicular . . . also passing into filiform, reticulated, and arborescent shapes; and occasionally

spongiform," &c. But it does not show you, as Ruskin could—pulling out drawer after drawer of his plush-lined cabinets, and letting you handle and peer into the dainty things with a lens—what gold, as Nature makes it, actually is. The scientific book never asks why some gold is born in the shape of tiny, solid, squarish crystals, as truly crystals as the uncut diamonds lying beside them, or the quartz in which they nestle ; or why other samples are spun into hair, or woven into wisps, or ravelled into knots of natural gold lace ; or again, why these have grown into the shape of exquisitely finished moss, and those into seaweed leaves, flat and curly, and powdered with dust of gold crystals, springing from the rough brown stone, or semi-transparent spar, inside of which you can see them like flower-stalks in water. Here is quite a new world of wonder and mystery, and that is the kind of "science" he puzzled over. Some more solid masses, not water-worn nuggets, are like a tiny *netsuke* ; he had a miniature cobra, chased with its scales—all by the art of Nature ; and others so like early Greek coins that one might fancy they had given suggestions to primitive mint-masters, who like all good artists modelled their work on Nature. What a happy world, he used to say, if all the gold were in its native fronds ; and even for jewellery how much prettier these leaves of gold as it grew, than anything the manufacturing goldsmith sells you. I have drawn a group of eight such fronds, arranged as a cross, the centre piece with two tiny crystals of quartz naturally set into it, a gift from his collection to a friend, as an instance of what Ruskin called a jewel : and from his own rapid sketch in colour (over leaf) is a knot of natural silver wire, for silver, too, has its "arborescent filiform" shapes.

After gold and silver and diamonds you might think the interest of the mineral-drawers would begin to wane. But no ! we come to richer colours and still more striking forms. This big pebble, rosy pink, with hazy streaks inside which catch the light as you turn it about, and reveal mysterious inner archi-

texture—that is a ruby ; and this also, a bit of frozen raspberry jam engraved with mystic triangles, one inside another like a dwarf-wrought seal of a fairy king. Then hold up this slab of talc to the light ; the dark patch in it glows like a red lamp with the intense colour of the garnet. Lower down the cabinet there are bunches of beryls, angelica stalks Queen Thyri would not have scorned ; or trimmed by Nature into quaint likeness to those six-sided Austrian pencils, point



GOLD AS IT GROWS

(ACTUAL SIZE)

and all : emeralds in short and snapped-off sticks of mossy green ; pale pink rods of tourmaline ; clippings of a baby's hair, but crimson, and so fragile you must not breathe on them—that is ruby copper, chalcotrichite ; black needles of rutile piercing through and through the solid, glassy quartz-crystals ; amianthus, plush on a stone, tow on a distaff, waving seaweed in a motionless aquarium of hard spar. Why were these dainty things created, or how did they grow, hidden away from all possible light for their colours to develop or sight of man to enjoy them, until mining folk dug them up from their lurking-places ? And then there are those which even when found show little of their beauty until they are polished ;

agates, and Labrador spar, and malachites, and fire opals ; what theory of Nature accounts for this latent loveliness ? he would say ; how little this kind of beauty is known and



NATIVE SILVER

BY JOHN RUSKIN

enjoyed by people who are satisfied with jewellery from the price-list ! One of his plans was to form a jewel-museum in which the curator should exhibit, with lens and leisurely explanations, such treasures to admiring groups of visitors. The place, indeed, was fixed, at Keswick ; the curator named. But the curator designate shirked the too responsible honour.





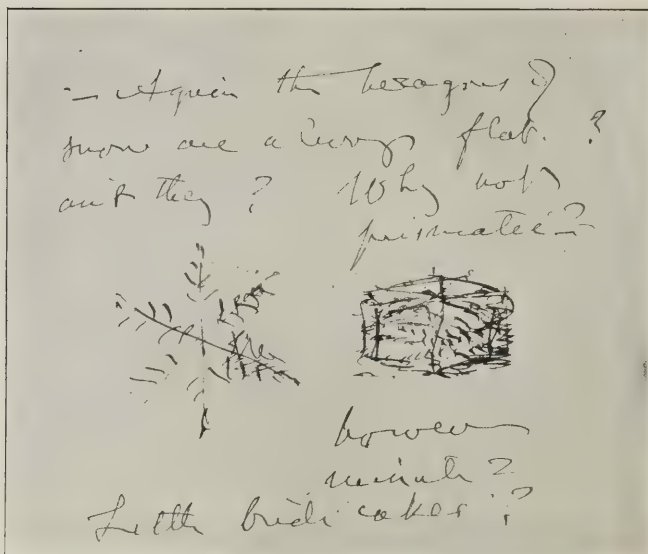


Less for pure beauty but still wonderful were all the many forms of chalcedony and kindred minerals toward the end of his entertainment. One is a specimen of hyalite—a sort of ropy, waxy glass-bubble holding water inside. He would tell how he wanted to know why the water was in it, and what sort of mysterious liquid was so sealed up and treasured by the powers that be ; so he had it carefully sawn asunder and the sacred ichor collected and analysed. It turned out to be just like Thames water.

The page photographed from one of his earliest writings—the mineral dictionary he made at ten or eleven in a shorthand which, later on, he could not read himself—is now in the Coniston Museum. It shows his very early interest and diligence, at the time when he cared nothing for pictures or political economy, but loved Nature in all her ways. This page begins his juvenile account of Galena, a word which in later days often brought out a smile and a story. For years, he said, he was wretched because his great and glorious specimen of this same Lead Glance had a flaw in it, an angular notch, breaking the dainty exactitude of the big, black, shining crystal, otherwise as regular as the most consummate art could plane and polish it. One day, with the lens, he noticed that the form of the notch corresponded with the shape of a crystal of calcite embedded in another specimen. His galena had not been damaged ; it was Nature's work, all the more wonderful now ; and life was still worth living.

Few Ruskin readers know his papers on Agates in back numbers of the *Geological Magazine*, with their fine coloured plates illustrating some of the best in his grand series ; but this was one of his pet studies, and it was a great regret of his declining age that he had never carried it through. By careful drawing he learned, as any one must, far more of the secrets of agate-structure than can be found by merely looking and talking, and he thought that the usual explanation was quite insufficient ; agates were not made in layers poured one after

another into the hollows of the rock, but by some kind of "segregation," the withdrawal of different materials from a mixed mass. This is not the place to discuss his theory; but only to note that duplicates of his own set, in illustration of his



BIT OF A LETTER WITH SKETCH OF SNOW CRYSTALS

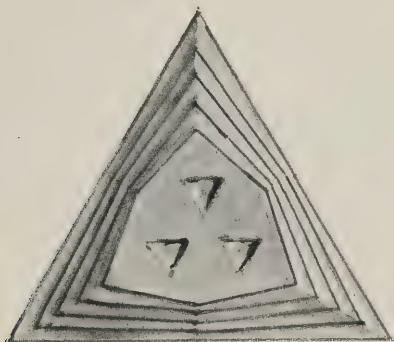
By JOHN RUSKIN

papers, are now in the Coniston Museum, which indeed was founded by his gift of a general mineral collection in 1887.

His "Catalogue of a series of specimens in the British Museum (Natural History) illustrative of the more common forms of Native Silica" (George Allen, 1884) to a certain extent suggests his agate theory. This is well worth looking through when a visit to the Museum gives the reader an opportunity of comparing these beautiful stones, many of them

presented by Ruskin, who also gave the great jewels he called the Colenso diamond and the Edwardes ruby (after his friend Sir Herbert Edwardes, whose life he wrote in "A Knight's Faith").

Another printed catalogue, running to fifty pages, was written to expound a collection given to St. David's School, Reigate (the Rev. W. H. Churchill's, now at Stonehouse, Broadstairs) in 1883. A third collection, similarly catalogued,



DIAMOND DIAGRAM

BY JOHN RUSKIN

was given to Kircudbright Museum, and others to Whitelands College, Chelsea, and the St. George's (now called the Ruskin) Museum, Sheffield. These do not exhaust the list of his gifts, but serve to show how eager he was to share his interests with boys and girls, working men and the big public, who must surely, he thought, love these phases of Nature's beauty when they had opportunity of seeing them.

After the illness of 1878 which set him aside from Oxford work, he took to stones of all sorts with ardour. Even at Oxford he had not quite forgotten them: the lecture called "The Iris of the Earth" (given in London, February 1876) is a poetical miscellany of jewel-lore. While he was at work on

this at Oxford he sent the college messenger round with a pressing note for one of his pupils to come at once. "I want to know what *gules* means. Run to Professor —— and Professor —— and find out. The books say it means *gueule*, the red of a wild beast's throat, but that is too nasty." "Why not *gul*? I think that is Persian for *rose*," said the pupil. "Wonderful!" said he; "*In the gardens of Gul!* Of course!" And down it went in the lecture.

At Brantwood in the early 'eighties there was a busy time with minerals. He was trying to get deeper into the secret, and to look up the more scientific side of the question. He even got a microscope, and his secretary had to make drawings of diamond anatomy, which I am afraid only confirmed him in his distrust of microscopes. He pored over crystallography, and tried to rub up his mathematics, only to find that nothing of the sort explained why gold made itself into fronds, and snow into stars, and diamonds into marvellous domes built up of shield within shield, round-sided triangles—not round-sided after all, but mysteriously straight lines, simulating curves, and so blended and harmonised and perfected that a good uncut diamond is perhaps the most bewilderingly beautiful thing in Nature. Here is one of his sketches giving a diagram of the big "St. George's" diamond he bought for £1000, and studied, and made his secretary study, for weeks together. It ought perhaps to be said that the diagram represents only one facet, and that this is magnified fully two diameters; the diamond is large, but not so large as all that. I cannot reproduce the best drawing made at the time, too elaborate in its attempt at transparency and detail; "That style of drawing was too utter by far," he said; but his diagram may give some hint of the reason why he preached "uncut diamonds" as well as the jewellery of native gold.

He put his theory into practice more than once; especially in a fine pendant he gave to Mrs. Severn, who designed the setting. It is about two and three-quarter inches long, not

including the clasp. Two large moonstones *en cabochon* but irregular in outline are set in an arrangement of gold leaves and twigs; among them are nine spikes of uncut sapphire each about half an inch long, radiating from the moonstones, which are joined by two uncut diamonds, one round and one triangular; a quantity of small rubies are dotted about the group to give contrast of colour. The effect is most picturesque, but of course it has not the glitter—the vulgar glitter, Ruskin called it—of ordinary jewellery. To see the special charm you have to look close.

A much more entertaining and to him satisfactory line of research was in finding illustrations of crystal form and banded structure among the stones of the neighbourhood, with which his porch became encumbered, or in sugar and salt and coloured pastry, or tracing the diffusion of cream in fruit-juice, which makes a temporary agate. It was more fun for the secretary too, than working problems in the kitchen after bedtime, the only chance for a smoke; and who can tackle geometry of three dimensions without a pipe? If Ruskin had smoked he might have mastered his Miller and Cloiseaux; but it was better that he should satisfy himself that their ways were not his ways. The poetry of jewel-lore can't be stated in terms of *h. k. l.*

Those pie-crust experiments were everybody's delight. They are partly told in "Deucalion," illustrated with drawings by Laurence Hilliard, who became expert at bogus mineralogy on his own account. After displays of nature's wonders and Ruskin's eloquence, the visitor at luncheon or tea (tea was at the dining-room table) often did not know whether to laugh or look shocked when Laurie made minerals of bread and jam, or anything handy, irresistibly like; and described them gravely in the very accents of the Professor, who found it "entirely lovely," and sometimes even suggestive. He was always looking out for analogies, and could make bogus minerals too. One day, showing his jewels to a very young lady, he brought out of

its purple plush nook in the glittering drawer a wonderful specimen, ropy, arborescent, semi-transparent, lustrous; descending the while on stalactitic growth, chalcedony, chrysoprase, hyalite. "And what is this called?" she asked. "Wax, my dear; I got it at the candle myself."

XII

RUSKIN'S LIBRARY





## XII

### RUSKIN'S LIBRARY

IN any strange house, while you wait for your host or hostess, how much you gather of their tastes and ways from the books on the table and in the shelves! You cannot help noticing either the presence or the absence of literature, and you do not need to open the volumes to guess what sort of reading the good people like. Well-known bindings and styles of binding betray them at once; and unless they are abnormally tidy their pet books are sure to be somewhere in the room they use. Of course, one must discount the evidence of a cover which too obviously matches the furniture; and if you are an author, and expected to call, be not too lifted up on spying your own book gracefully displayed. You may assume that working books, professional tools, are in the workshop; and there are few houses without a certain litter of ephemeral printing, magazines and library volumes, necessary for intelligent conversation. But if the people read, you will soon know it, and learn at a glance much about their tastes and characters.

When you know your friends well enough to browse among their books you learn still more. The way they cut their pages, skipping or plodding; and if they ever do scribble on the margins, what they have marked; and which books are much used, and which are exiled to top shelves; and how they are kept—unbound, or perhaps all too beautifully bound;

these things tell you more than an autobiography would, more than many years of ordinary acquaintance.

Ruskin's library was scattered all over his house—and though he has been dead these three years, and for many years earlier made little use of his books, the bulk of them still remain pretty much as he left them. At one time, when he was busy upon literary work, he was continually buying, and every corner was heaped with new purchases and old lots weeded out to be given away or sold ; but the net result of his choice and taste, what he personally cared for and kept, can be seen by a visitor at Brantwood—the books for constant use in the study, and favourite reading in his bedroom, and the rest dispersed about the place. Most of these books I remember in just these same places twenty-five years ago, or more ; so that in taking you into his study I am showing you the workshop where he wrote “Oxford Lectures” and “Fors Clavigera,” and handling the tools he used.

Art and Political Economy were the main subjects of those lectures and letters, and I suppose the public assumes that these were the subjects most interesting to him. Whether you are of those who think him great on Art but astray on Economics, or of the later school who have resolved that he never knew anything of Art, but had real insight and foresight in matters social and political, you would expect to find evidences of both—rows of reference volumes, and all the standard works. But they are not here ; Art and Political Economy are conspicuous by their absence.

Perhaps you will query my sweeping statement as you take down a volume of Crowe and Cavalcaselle from the “history bookcase” to the right of the fireplace : but see, it is only a stray volume!—and open it ; only a few pages are cut, and those considerably bescribbled with dissent. Ought he to have known by heart these authorities on Italian painting ? It might have saved him from an error or two, and from some useless discussions ; but he knew the pictures themselves, and his

business was not to write handbooks, but to bring his readers directly into touch with the generalised human view he took of painting. There is, however, the "Dictionnaire de l'Architecture" of Viollet-le-Duc, much used in parts, for he alternately admired the research and quarrelled with the conclusions of the great French architect, whose name he persisted in spelling "Violet." There are some very successful artists whose perspective is always wrong; and others whose drawing can always be corrected by an art student; but they can paint pictures! Ruskin's work is full of little faults; *de minimis non curat*; but he got at the root of the matter, mostly, and he could make you see it. All the tinkering criticism about his mistakes only shows that he thought "first-hand," so to say, and wrote with a full pen.

This bookcase is chiefly made up of Carlyle, Gibbon, Alison, Milman, and the old standards, of course thickly annotated. There are also some volumes of Mr. W. S. Lilly, but you may open them and find no sign of life; Ruskin may have read but he has not marked. There is his old copy of Lord Lindsay's "Christian Art" (1847), reviewed by him in the June *Quarterly* of that year. It is stamped with "Mr. Murray's compliments," but that must refer to the previous owner. You see his name in queer cramped pencil "Burgon: Oriel," with Greek e—Burgon of the Greek vase, the High Churchman, whose dark thin face and bright eyes, and humorous contempt for all "doxies" but his own, make him so well remembered by Oxford men of the passing generation. There is something odd in Ruskin's early excursion into primitive Italian art being, as it were, "*vice* Burgon, resigned." Then there is "Roman Antiquities," by Alexander Adam, LL.D., 1819, doubly ear-marked by "John J. Ruskin," and kept for his father's sake, and for the sake of his father's old schoolmaster. Ruskin, at all times, was open to the appeal of associations; all his judgments about men, women and things must be corrected by the personal equation, and without

his biography one can never quite rightly appraise his works.

The "Bible of Amiens" and some passages in the latest lectures hint that he was really interested in Anglo-Saxons and Irish Saints. There is the Venerable Bede, evidently studied, and the life of St. Patrick—you know he was always respectful to the patron of Ireland—but not a leaf cut! There is J. R. Green's "Making of England," appreciatively annotated, and Sharon Turner, much marked and cut down in a reckless way to fit the shelf. A much worse example of this chopping of books is Westwood's "Miniatures and Ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish MSS.," a most valuable folio, from which Ruskin has sawn the top edge and ripped out all the best plates. As in the case of his mediæval missals, scribbled on the margin by his irreverent pen, he would say that his books were for use and not for curiosities. These plates were ripped out, not for wanton mischief or in vulgar carelessness, but to show to his classes at lectures. The margins were cut, so that the books might be put away in shelves or cabinets, clearing the workshop of a busy man, instead of leaving them about to be mishandled and dog-eared; for the best of housemaids cannot be expected always to treat the master's litter as if they loved it. None of these volumes are so damaged that a little vamping would not set them right; though of course they would not be the tall copies prized by bibliomaniacs. But how many of these tall copies are read by their buyers?

On the other hand he bound some volumes much more sumptuously than they deserved. On this shelf there is a very splendid tome, lettered on the back "SWISSE HISTOR.," evidently bound abroad, which on opening you find to be Gaullieur's "La Suisse Historique," much used for intended work on Swiss towns; and another grand, thick, bevelled, gilded, crushed-morocco series lettered "HEPHAESTUS," which turns out to be "Les Ouvriers des Deux Mondes" (Paris, 1857)—the only sample we can find of the Political Economy we were



*(Miss Brickhill, photographer)*

RUSKIN'S SWISS FIGURE



looking for. Nor is there anything of the sort elsewhere in the room.

On the other side of the fireplace is a nest of shelves filling the corner ; you see it in the picture of Ruskin's study, above his armchair. These shelves are full of maps and scraps, presented poems at the top and other gleanings awaiting removal when he should next put his room in order ; old Baedekers and chess-books lower down, with the set of chessmen and the little travelling board, handy for a game after tea ; and boxes filled with the British Museum reproductions of those bonny Greek coins, thick, rich and bossy, like nuggets come to life or fossils in metal.

Over the fire are no books, but, as many pictures of the Brantwood study have shown, a della Robbia relief, replacing the Turner which once hung there ; and the stuffed kingfisher, Cyprus pottery and figurines, a bit or two of colour in Japanese enamel and Broseley lustre, and in the middle of the mantelpiece the Swiss girl which we have photographed. It is a brown old wood-carving, nearly a foot high, with the vineyard pruning-hook (now broken away) and the *hotte* or creel full of vine-leaves (they use the word *hot* for a pannier or creel in the Cumberland dialect also) ; and though the drapery is commonplace—kerchief, corset and skirt—there is something of the fine school of sculpture about the lines, not unworthy of a good Nuremberg bronze. I do not know how or whence this figure came to the family, but it was old Mrs. Ruskin's before it was brought to Brantwood, and here it is, so to say, the very centrepiece of the house. When he sat writing at his usual place and looked up, his eye would light on it first of all, before rising to the Florentine Madonna above or wandering to the Turners on the wall to the right, or out of window to the lake and mountains and Coniston Old Hall opposite. What has he not said about the beauty of the peasant-girl in the fields as compared with the proud ideals of classic art?—that the painting we most need is to paint cheeks red with health, and so on?



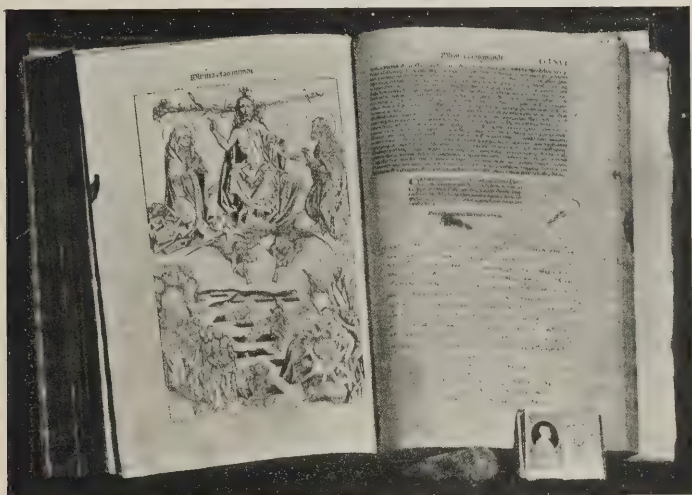
Here was always the reminder of that bedrock principle of his thought. You know how George Borrow describes a writer who used to find his inspiration in a queer portrait over the fireplace? This, I think—though I never heard Ruskin say so, and perhaps it is rather the symbol than the cause—gives us the keynote of his study and the work that went on in it.

The rest of his library represents not so much his professed occupation as what you might call his hobbies. To the left, within reach of the writing-table, all is Botany, and not very modern botany either. Beyond the cases full of Turners in sliding frames, and drawers of business papers, all is Geology and Natural History, mostly out of date, or shall we call it "classical"? There is Mineralogy, old Jameson, and Cloiseaux, gorgeously bound, and Miller, and perhaps a larger number of the handbook class, in French and English, and of more modern date, than in any other department. There are his old friends Forbes and Phillips on glaciers and geology, and some more recent three-volume treatises with uncomplimentary scribbles on their margins. There is Yarrell's "Birds"—he never could endure the cuts; and three sets of Bewick. One of the most used is Donovan's "British Insects," eight volumes, with coloured plates.

Opposite you find more botany; the nineteen massive folios of "*Floræ Danicæ Descriptio*," the twenty-seven volumes of the old, old *Botanical Magazine*, with the beautiful plates of Sowerby, the three dozen volumes and index of Sowerby's "English Botany," the six volumes of Baxter's "Island Plants," the nine volumes of Lecoq's "*Géographie Botanique*," and so forth; all showing his purely artistic and "unscientific" interest in natural history. Modern anatomy and evolution were nothing to him; what he cared about was the beauty of the creatures and the sentiments that clustered round them in mythology and poetry.

Of poetry and *belles-lettres* he had a great assortment, as

might be expected, and mostly in volumes interesting for their history, though not chosen as rare editions. He kept his grandfather's "Burns," his father's "Byron," his own college "Aristophanes," with copious lecture-notes and sketches of the Poetry of Architecture in blank spaces. He had Morris's



*(Miss Hargreaves, photographer)*

TWO BOOKS OF RUSKIN'S—A "NUREMBERG CHRONICLE" AND  
HIS POCKET "HORACE"

"Earthly Paradise," "from his friend the author"; a "Linnæus" that had belonged to Ray, the great Cumbrian botanist; "A Dyaloge of Syr Thomas More Knyghte" (1530), with the neat autograph, "ffrancis Bacons booke," apparently that of the famous Lord Bacon; and, of course, his Scott manuscripts have been often described by visitors to Brantwood. One little token of unexpected reverence for a name which hasty readers might think was not to be spoken in Ruskin's

study, is a tiny duodecimo in yellow silk—"Dialogo di Antonio Manetti," about the size, form, and measurements of Dante's Hell—inscribed apparently by the great artist "di Michelagnol Buonarroti."

Greek authors, and a few translations like Jowett's "Plato,"; Missals and Bibles in mediæval Greek and Latin; a few old printed books—"Danthe" (1491), and a couple more "fourteeners"—but only on subjects in which he was interested, such as heraldry—Randle Holmes (1688), and Guillim (1638), coloured by Ruskin and much marked; Douglas's "Virgil" (1553), Chapman's "Homer," the original "Cowley" of 1668, various copies of "Poliphilo," together with standard poets, complete what may be called the bric-à-brac of the shelves above the mineral collection. Some readers of Omar Khayyam may be interested in his dissent to stanza 34, and energetic assent to 21, 25, 45 and 46, scored on the margins in the edition of 1879; and some of his artistic readers, will they be sympathetic or scandalised at his collection of Rodolph Toepffer's Genevese caricatures? There is very little about Art in all these lines of books: Millingen's "Greek Vases," and the still greater work of Lenormant and De Witte are there indeed, but the only other art books are those of two old friends, Prout's "Sketches at Home and Abroad," and Harding's "Elementary Art."

Some of the books he used for special work are in other parts of the house, and many must have been sold or given away when they were done with. A number of those he gave away are in a case at the Coniston Museum, from which we photograph a fine Nuremberg Chronicle side by side with the tiny "Horace" he used to carry in his pocket on journeys abroad. In his bedroom he kept a great deal of favourite reading for wakeful nights—Carlyle and Helps, Scott and Byron, Shakespeare and Spenser, Miss Edgeworth and Madame de Genlis, and the books of his youth, a most curious collection of dingy antiquity, with not a few French novels: and else-

where are the ponderous tomes from which he gleaned. His work was not done without much reference to books ; but, after all, it was never compilation. Perhaps it is a truism, but this look round Ruskin's library gives it some freshness and force—that the writing which makes its mark in the world is not the second-hand, patchwork sort, however laborious and however learned. He looked at Nature, and wrote down what he saw ; he felt deeply, and wrote what he felt.



XIII

RUSKIN'S BIBLES



### XIII

## RUSKIN'S BIBLES

"RUSKIN ET LA BIBLE"—who would have expected it?—is the title of a French book, written by a science professor, and published in Paris.

We all know that his works, from "Modern Painters" to "Præterita," are full of the Bible. Sometimes his allusions and quotations are merely ornamental, and sometimes his remarks are sharp enough to pain the reader; for Ruskin went through many phases of faith, or, rather, through a long period of doubt, from which he came, in his later years, into a new and very simple acceptance of the Christian hope. But at all times he took the Bible seriously, and in many a passage he has made its thoughts and stories live for us with marvellous reality. Hear him tell the Death of Moses or the Call of Peter in those well-known pages of his masterpiece, or follow him in "Fors" through unpalatable deductions from neglected commands, and you cannot but feel that he was a great preacher, "a man of one book," and that book was the Bible.

How he was brought up upon it he tells us in his autobiography. In Coniston Museum not the least interesting of the Ruskin relics is the Bible from which, as he noted on the fly-leaf, his mother taught him the paraphrases. Turning it over one sees how the parts he has named as especially studied, Psalm cxix. above all, have been soiled; for even little John Ruskin, model of home-bred boys, was like Tommy Grimes



the scamp—he couldn't always be good—and continual thumbing embrowns the page.

It was his mother to whom he owed this youthful training in a close knowledge of the text, "without note or comment." This was her Bible in the earlier days. Later in life she laid the somewhat worn volume aside for a new one, a nonpareil Oxford Bible with references, 1852, with inscription in her husband's handwriting—

MARGARET RUSKIN

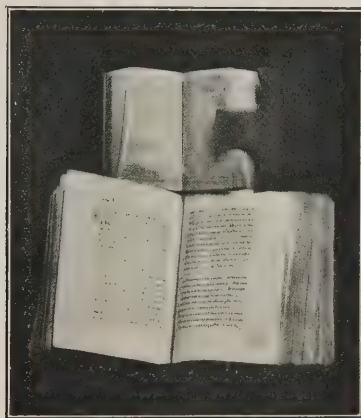
DENMARK HILL

BOUGHT AT DOVER 13 MAY, 1858

—and a bearded thistle-head is fastened for a memento on the fly-leaf. To the end of her life she read in it every day, and every day learned two verses by heart; she has pencilled on the margins the dates in her last two years, 1870 and 1871; and after the daily reading she always put the volume away in its yellow silk bag with purple strings. This curious habit of dating came out also in her son's old age; perhaps the modern psychologist will diagnose in it some form of degeneracy, but in old times dates were important from a lingering respect for astrology, which is betrayed—most likely unintended—in the precision with which John Ruskin's father noted the exact hour of his birth. It is in a Baskett Bible of 1741, with engraved title-page, and a pencil drawing, probably by John in his boyhood, stuck in as a sort of frontispiece—a copy from a picture of Jesus Mocked. Opposite to it is written: "John Ruskin, son of John James Ruskin and Margaret Ruskin, Born 8 February 1819 at  $\frac{1}{4}$  past 7 o'clock Morning. Baptized (*sic*) 20 Feby 1819 by the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Boyd"—the father, I understand, of "A.K.H.B." To emphasise the Scottish character of the family one may note that this volume has bound up with it at the end "The Psalms of David in Meeter," printed at Edinburgh, 1738. It is most curious that Mr. J. J. Ruskin, a distinctly well-educated man, should have made the mistake in

spelling, and carried on the old tradition of providing material for the horoscope.

Another Baskett Bible of 1749, nicely rebound in old red morocco, handsomely tooled, bears the family's earliest register. It is writted in a big, unscholarly hand in the blank space of the last page of Maccabees ; for this volume contained an



*(Miss Hargreaves, photographer)*

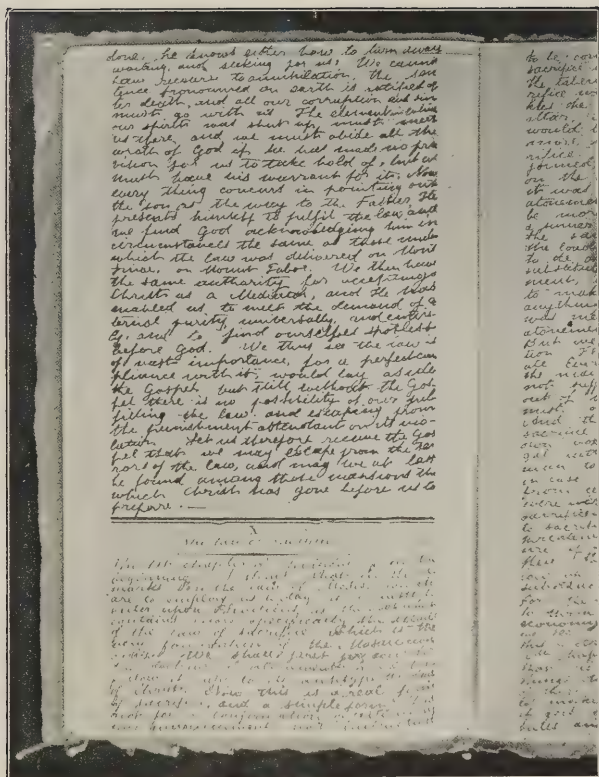
THE BIBLE FROM WHICH RUSKIN LEARNT IN CHILDHOOD,  
AND HIS GREEK MS. PSALTER

Apocrypha, and the page becoming worn, it was stuck down on the cover. "John Ruskin, Baptized Aprill 9th, 1732 O.S." (*i.e.*, 1733 new style), and then follow the children of this John, with dates and hours of birth, between 1756 and 1772—Margaret, Mary, William, John Thomas, Elizabeth, Robert, and James. John Thomas, born October 22, 1761, was the father of John James, the father of John. Like many other remarkable men who owed their fame to their powers rather than to their circumstances, Ruskin came of a line of decent,

respectable, bourgeois folk, who read their Bibles, "feared God, and took their own part when required."

His earliest literary training, so to say, was closely connected with Bible study: for every Sunday he had to take notes of the sermon and write out a report of the discourse. One of his childish sermon-books is preserved in the Coniston Museum, and a page is reproduced here to show the care of writing and choice of wording insisted upon. In the stories and verses with which he amused himself, he learned a good deal of freedom and ease: in these he learned dignity of style, a corrective to boyish flippancy. Also he got the habit of thinking with his pen, so that he nearly always scribbled when most people would only meditate. His father's Bible (a small pica 8vo, Oxford edition of 1846, on the fly-leaf "Margaret Ruskin to her husband John James Ruskin, 1850," finely rebound in tawny leather, gilt) was used by him in later times, and sidelined vigorously; all the blank spaces are scribbled over with the thoughts that came as he read.

There is a grand Old Testament in Greek MS. The back is lettered "tenth century," but Dr. Caspar René Gregory, who spent some time in examining the books at Brantwood, pointed out that the Greek date for 1463 could be dimly seen printed off from the lost final leaf. It was bound in vellum in or after 1817, to judge from the watermark in the fly-leaves; the binding alone is worm-eaten, leaving the body of the book untouched. The pages, a little waterstained, are written large and quaint with the reed pen, and adorned with strips of painted pattern and Byzantine portraits of the authors of the books—Solomon as a young king, Isaiah and the prophets in varying phases of grey-bearded dignity and elaborate robes of many colours, rather coarsely but very richly painted. Such a book to most would be quite too sacred for anything but occasional turning with careful finger-tips, or a paper-knife delicately inserted at the outer margin of the leaves; not to say too crabbed in its

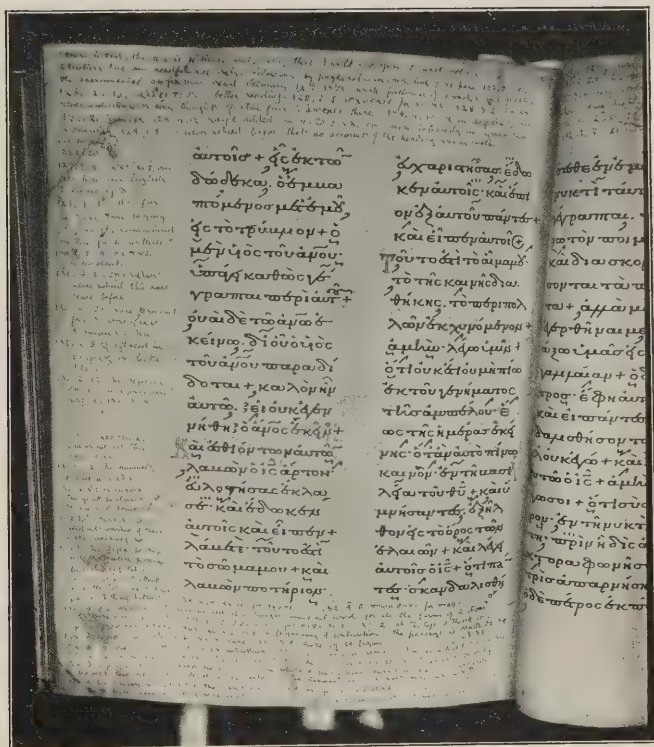


(Miss Brichhill, photographer)

A PAGE FROM ONE OF THE SERMON-BOOKS WRITTEN BY  
RUSKIN AS A BOY



contractions and old style calligraphy to be read with ease. But Ruskin read it, and annotated as he read. He did the same



(Miss Brickhill, photographer)

THE GREEK GOSPELS, WITH ANNOTATIONS BY RUSKIN

with the Greek Psalter in the Coniston Museum, shown in the illustration on p. 197; he did it still more copiously, and in ink, not merely in erasible pencil, in his most valuable tenth-century Greek Gospels, or rather Book of Lessons, from which we

have a page photographed. I am very far from saying that this is a practice to be imitated; but any one who wishes to follow Ruskin in his more intimate thoughts on the Bible, at the time of crisis in 1875 when he was busy on this book, and when he was beginning to turn from the agnostic attitude of his middle life to the old-fashioned piety of his age—any one who wants to get at his mind would find it here.

Some of the remarks merely comment on the grammatical forms, or the contractions, or the style of writing. Where a page is written with a free hand, evidently to the scribe's enjoyment, he notes the fact; and likewise where the scribe found it dull, and penned perfunctorily. That is quite like him, to ask how the man felt at his work! But there are many curious hints of questioning, and then confessions of his doubts about the doubts, that go to one's heart to read. "I have always profound sympathy for Thomas," he scribbles. "Well questioned, Jude!" "This reads like a piece of truth (John xviii. 16). How little one thinks of John's being by, in that scene!" "The hour being unknown, as well as unlooked for (Matt. xxiv. 42), the Lord comes, and the servant does not know that He has—(and has his portion, unknowingly?)." To the cry for Barabbas (Matt. xxvii. 20) he adds, "Remember! it was not the mob's fault, except for acting *as* a mob"; and to verse 24 (Pilate washing his hands)—"How any popular electionist or yielding governor can read these passages of Matthew and not shrivel!" On the parable of the vine, the earlier note to the verse about the withered branch cast into the fire and burned is—"How useless! and how weak and vain the whole over-fatigued metaphor!" But then—"I do not remember when I wrote this note, but the 'over-fatigued metaphor' comes to me to-day, 8th Nov. 1877, in connection with the *καθὼς ἡγάπησε*, as the most precious and direct help and life." You remember John xv. 9: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love." That word was the help and life he found.





*(Miss Brickhill, photographer)*

KING HAKON'S BIBLE





He used to read his Latin Bibles too, but most of these were collected rather for their artistic value than otherwise. Of printed bibles there were few in his library ; one, a Latin version in three volumes, purple morocco, printed by Fran. Gryphius, 1541, and adorned, as the title puts it, with images suitable no less for their beauty than for their truth, has the cuts resembling Holbein's work in "Icones Historiarum Veteris Testamenti" (Lyons, apud Joannem Frellonium, 1547). But he loved mediæval illumination, and owned too many thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Bibles, Psalters, and Missals to be described in this chapter.

Mention may be made of a few, such as the big fourteenth-century Latin Bible, splendidly written in double columns with stiff Gothic patterns in red and blue, and dainty little decorative initials, each a picture. Some of these he used to set his pupils and assistants to enlarge ; and a very difficult job it was to get the curves to Ruskin's mind. If you made them too circular he would expound the spring of the lines until you felt that you had been guilty of all the vices of the vulgarest architect's draughtsman, an awful character in the true Ruskinian's eyes. If you insisted on the "infinite" and hyperbolic sweep of the contour—and you can't magnify a sixpence into a dinner-plate without some *parti pris*—then you had the lecture on Moderation and Restraint. But Ruskin was always very good-humoured and patient in these lessons ; in the end a happy mean was found between Licence and Formality, and such works as the "Noah's Ark"—now, I believe, in the Sheffield museum—were elaborated. Perhaps photography would have been a shorter cut ; but it should have been capital training, if one had known what use to make of it.

Then there is a Versio Vulgata MS. of the thirteenth century, poorly half bound in shabby boards, with a pencil note—not by Ruskin, of course—"bo<sup>t</sup> at Naples 1826 for 21/-." Twice or thrice as many pounds would be cheap for it now, I suppose. A pleasant story is told by Bishop Nicolson

in his diary of the year when Queen Anne came to the throne, of his meeting the famous Dr. Bentley on the Queen's birthday (February 8, 1702), and how the great Cambridge scholar laughed at the mania for possessing rare editions—a fancy by no means exclusively of these latter days. "He ridicul'd ye Expensive humour of purchaseing old Editions of Books at extravagant Rates; a Vanity to wch ye present E. of Sunderland and B(ishop) of N(orwich) much subject. The former bought a piece of Cicero's works out of Dr. Fr. Bernard's Auction, printed about 1480, at ye Rate of 3lb. 2s. 6d. which Dr. Bentley himself had presented to yt physitian, and wch cost him no more than the odd half Crown." The Bishop of Barrow-in-Furness in editing the diary has tried to trace the subsequent fortune of the book for which Bentley thought £3 2s. 6d. too high a price. There seem to have been two volumes, each of which might answer to the description, sold at the dispersal of the Blenheim library in 1881; and of these one fetched £54, and the other £38, both prices greatly below their market value at the present time.

Very like the last mentioned in Ruskin's collection is his small thirteenth-century Bible, with minute double-columned writing, as tiny as newspaper print, but perfectly readable, and lovely to look at. This is an English-written book, with a glossary of names at the end; it came from the library of the Hon. Archibald Fraser, son of the celebrated Lord Lovat. Another small thirteenth-century Bible is Italian work; a German MS. Latin prayer-book and psalter dating from about 1220, with rich bold pictures and ornament in broad bands of blue and burnished masses of gold, bound in grey-green velvet, was a great treasure. His so-called St. Louis Psalter and the prayer-book of Yolande of Navarre have been often mentioned by him, but to go into these would take us away from our subject—his Bibles.

The one he prized most is known as King Hakon's Bible, from a reference on the fly-leaf to King Hakon V. of Norway.





It is a small volume (shown in our illustration as standing in front of the embroidered cover in which his Birthday Addresses are kept) with 613 leaves of the thinnest vellum, measuring no more than  $4\frac{1}{4}$  by  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and written in tiny black-letter, double columned, every page ornamented ; there are more than eighty delicately painted pictures, and hundreds of daintily coloured initials, a perfect treasury of decorative art. The binding is of the sixteenth century, and thought to be English ; boards covered with brown leather, brass bosses and clasps, and stamped with panels of griffins in relief, and the motto repeated between them of "Jhesus help." The book is French work of the middle of the thirteenth century, and the black-letter inscription reads, "Anno dni. M°. CCC°. X°. istum librum emit fr. hanricus prior provicialis a conventu hathersleu. de dono dni. regis Norwegie," which is to say : "In 1310 brother Henry, provincial prior, bought this book from the Conventus (whatever that means) at Haderslev (in Sleswig) out of the gift of my lord the king of Norway." It hardly seems as though the king had owned the book, as Ruskin believed when he bought it, but it is not surprising that the keepers of the National Library at Christiania were disappointed in finding that it had gone into his hands from Quaritch's catalogue, just too soon for them ; and that the Norwegians sent a scholar to report upon it, Herr Kristian Koren, and on Ruskin's death again tried to become possessors, though Ruskin's heirs have, so far, not seen their way to part with the treasure he so much valued. To Herr Koren I owe the photograph of one of its pages, here reproduced.

These were all library Bibles, kept in his study, and used there ; but in travelling he had various little testaments which he carried with him, such as the set shown in the Ruskin Exhibition at Coniston in 1900. In his bedroom, for reading on wakeful nights, he had the "Stereotype Clarendon Press Bible, Printed by Samuel Collingwood and Co." in six volumes, one being the Apocrypha, and this, like others, bears marks of

much use in notes and pencillings. He had more respect for the Apocrypha than most Protestant Bible-readers. At one time (1881) he presented several copies of this Clarendon Press edition, bound just like his own, to a few friends whom he hoped to interest in "St. George's work," with the inscription, "From the Master." To the same he gave little squares of the pure gold, beaten thin, out of which he meant to strike his "St. George's coinage," saying, "Now you have taken St. George's money; and whether you call yourself one or no, you are a member of my Guild. I have caught you with guile!"

It is rather curious, and characteristic of his old-fashioned ways, that he used a bookmarker in his Bible—a dark blue ribbon, an inch wide, sewn to a card, on which was the text, "Day by day we magnify Thee," written and painted with a fifteenth-century style of ornament.

Quite at the end, his eyesight failed him for smaller type, and Mrs. Severn bought him a larger-typed Bible, which he read, or had read to him, constantly, up to his death. The only bit of his writing in it is a note of his sadder moods, "The burden of London, Isaiah xxiv."; I suppose he refers to the words, "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty . . . From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! . . ." Those who read "Fors" know how little he trusted our imperialistic optimism.

Such a Bible-reader, one might think, would have collected something in the way of a theological library, what are called helps to Bible-reading. But no! he read neither commentators nor modern critics, and I believe he had no interest in anybody's views about exegesis or analysis. He kept by him a few volumes of reference: Smith's "Bible Dictionary," Cruden, the "Englishman's Greek Concordance," Sharpe's "Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures" (he knew no Hebrew), and there were two copies of Finden's "Landscape Illustrations of

the Bible," one for his study and one for his bedroom. But even these few were little used ; to him the plain old text was the book he studied all through his eighty years, and knew as not many in this generation know it. Once in his rooms at Oxford I remember getting into a difficulty about the correct quotation of some passage. "Haven't you a concordance?" I asked. "I'm ashamed to say I have," he said. I did not quite understand him. "Well," he explained, "you and I oughtn't to need Cruden!"





XIV

RUSKIN'S "ISOLA"



#### XIV

### RUSKIN'S "ISOLA"

'I GAVE her that name," he said once, "because she is so unapproachable."

When he was a very young man he saw her first in Rome. He had been sent there for the winter because it was supposed he was going into a consumption. He had certainly been working very hard at Oxford—not only doing the necessary reading for honours, which need kill nobody, but all manner of literature, art, antiquities and science into the bargain, as his manner was; and he had taken terribly to heart the loss of the pretty French girl, on whom his boyish affections had been set for years. So he was in Rome as an invalid, restless and discontented; and he didn't like Raphael, and he didn't like the other things people ought to like. It must have been a difficult time for his parents; but then one can't expect to bring up a genius without a certain amount of trouble.

In a while he took a turn, and condescended to go with them to musical services. They were energetic anti-Romanists; but they went to St. Peter's to see the show, and to hear the singing. They thought he was beginning to develop an interest in music. But it was just the old story.

There was a beautiful Miss Tollemache in Rome that winter; "a fair English girl," he says, "who was not only the admitted Queen of beauty in the English circle of that winter in Rome, but was so, in the kind of beauty which I had

only hitherto dreamed of as possible, but never yet seen living ; statuesque severity with womanly sweetness joined. I don't think I ever succeeded in getting nearer than within fifty yards of her ; but she was the light and solace of all the Roman winter to me, in the mere chance glimpses of her far away, and the hope of them."

It was very like Ruskin, and it says very much for the reality of the romantic ideal he preached, that a few glimpses of a far-away beauty, whom he had neither the chance nor the intention of approaching, should have made a man of him, out of a pining, love-sick boy. Open-air sketching helped him out of his consumption, or whatever the disease was ; but the moral stimulus and reawakening of healthy imagination and power to work were given him by this pure enthusiasm for a beautiful face, fifty yards away.

He never saw her again for about ten years, not until she was a wedded wife. She had married a younger son of Earl Cowper and his wife, daughter of Lord and Lady Melbourne, and by second marriage wife of Lord Palmerston. The Hon. William Cowper was one of the most shining examples of the type—one does not see much about it in newspapers or histories, but private memoirs describe it in all ages, and no doubt it exists even in this—the type of good men in great positions, men who are in the world and very actively engaged in it, but quite unspotted. He began life as aide-de-camp to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in 1830, and went into Parliament in 1835 ; he was a Lord of the Treasury in 1845, then a Lord of the Admiralty, then President of the Board of Health, Vice-President of the Board of Trade, Paymaster-General, Chief Commissioner of Works, Vice-President of the Education Department of the Privy Council, Chairman of Mr. Fawcett's Committee on the Enclosure Acts ; it was he who saved Epping Forest in 1871, and was prime mover in the preservation of open spaces and in granting allotments to the poor ; he passed the Medical Bill in 1858, the Thames



LADY MOUNT TEMPLE, WHEN MRS. COWPER-TEMPLE, UNDER THE  
BEECH-TREES AT A BROADLANDS CONFERENCE

FROM A PAINTING BY EDWARD CLIFFORD ABOUT 1876



Embankment Bill in 1862-3, and the Courts of Justice Building Bill in 1863; the "Cowper-Temple Clause," to secure the reading of the Bible in Board Schools, was his; he was the great reconstructor of the London Parks and inventor of the scheme for distributing the Park flowers to hospitals, work-houses and schools. It would be long to tell how he made politics philanthropic and brought art into the public service. After 45 years in Parliament he was raised to the peerage as Lord Mount Temple, and died in 1888.

All these things are known, or knowable, to the public; but what is more to the point, *Histories of Our Own Times* don't tell us: how the lively Eton boy, always in scrapes, occasionally flogged, had according to Gladstone's reminiscence "the stamp of purity, modesty, gentleness upon him in a peculiar degree": how the dandy officer in the Blues wanted to go into the Church "as a means of escaping," he wrote, "the imminent dominion of the sins which it seemed so difficult to avoid": how the busy M.P. and official, Palmerston's step-son and favourite, kept through all distractions a perfectly holy and saintly life, a sense of nearness to God and devotion to His will, that should put much professional piety to shame.

For instance, in his diary he noted Queen Victoria's coronation, which, of course, he had attended—he had dined with the Queen a couple of days before—and continued, "The main object to be pursued in life is communion with God. It is a good method of testing any way of spending my time to ask, does it render me more ready for communion with God?" At twenty-seven he had long known all that evangelical piety at its best can teach; and he always kept the faith. Ten years later, his young wife—the Miss Tollemache of Ruskin's admiration, and the Lady Mount Temple laid in 1901 to rest by her husband's side—asked him, at a large party at the Palmerston's, what interested him most. "Oh, nothing," he answered, "compares in interest with communion with my Master, and work for Him." "This," she added, in her



privately printed volume of *Memorials*, "this was the spirit of his life, through all the blessed years I lived with him."

So after a long interval during which Ruskin had become a famous writer, and the girl at Rome had become the true helpmate of such a man, they met once more. It is rather curious to compare their two separate accounts of the meeting. The lady says, referring to the earlier part of her married life, in the 'fifties and 'sixties, "Another great delight to us at this time was going up occasionally to Denmark Hill for a happy day with Mr. Ruskin. It seems that, quite unknown to myself, he had noticed me when we were in Rome together in 1840! I was then eighteen. It was rather humiliating that when we met again, after about ten years, he did not recognise me. We became great friends: I was fond of his cousin Joan"—Mrs. Arthur Severn. Ruskin's way of putting it was rather different, and the mere man doesn't quite see where the humiliation comes in. He hated going to parties, he says; but one evening was introduced to a lady who was "too pretty to be looked at and yet keep one's wits about one"—that is very characteristic of him: so he talked a little with his eyes on the ground. "Presently, in some reference to Raphael or Michael Angelo, or the musical glasses, the word 'Rome' occurred; and a minute afterwards, something about Christmas in 1840. I looked up with a start; and saw that the face was oval—fair—the hair, light brown. After a pause I was rude enough to repeat her words, 'Christmas in 1840!—were you in Rome then?' 'Yes,' she said, a little surprised, and now meeting my eyes with hers, inquiringly. Another tenth of a minute passed before I spoke again. 'Why, I lost all that winter in Rome in hunting *you*!' It was Egeria herself! then Mrs. Cowper-Temple. She was not angry; and became from that time forward a tutelary power, of the brightest and happiest. Egeria always had her own way everywhere, thought that I also should have mine, and generally got it for me."



*(F. Hollyer, photographer, 9 Pembroke Square, W.)*

LADY MOUNT TEMPLE

FROM A CHALK DRAWING BY G. F. WATTS, R.A., 1894



By the kindness of Mrs. Arthur Severn I have by me the long series of Ruskin's letters to Lord and Lady Mount Temple. To any one who knew the people and circumstances touched upon, they would be most interesting; delightfully amusing for the most part, but sometimes intensely painful, where the fiery genius poured out his woes and disappointments, public and private, into their kindly ears. She was his confidant in all that unhappy love-story which ended so tragically for his later life: she was his sympathetic adviser in much of



LADY MOUNT TEMPLE

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1886 BY ROSE DURRANT AND SON, TORQUAY

his work. Mr. Cowper-Temple, too, was a kindly and helpful friend. In the early days he introduced Ruskin to Palmerston, and smoothed the way for various plans connected with the National Gallery and public art-works, many of which owed their promotion to Ruskin in the first instance. I cannot trace his direct influence in the philanthropic labours of Mr. Cowper-Temple and the politicians of his circle; but Ruskin was personally admired and loved by many of them, and certainly had an indirect share in much that was done for the help of the people. When he attempted to found his Guild of St. George, Mr. Cowper-Temple was one of the Trustees; not

with great faith in the scheme, but with much affection for the schemer.

After some years of "Mr. and Mrs. Cowper" the acquaint-



LADY MOUNT TEMPLE

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1889 BY ROSE DURRANT AND SON, TORQUAY

ance warmed into a closer friendship. They became Ruskin's "*φίλος*" and "*φίλη*," for he always nicknamed his intimates, and often so whimsically that his letters are quite ludicrously unprintable. To them he was "St. C."—Saint Chrysostom, the "golden-mouthed"; and sometimes, he liked to think,

St. Christopher. When he was very ill at Matlock in 1871 Mrs. Cowper-Temple came to nurse him, and from that time he was her "Loving little boy," and his friends were his "Dearest Mama" and "Dear Papa." His view of life was that he grew younger as the years went on—and so from being "Dearest Mama" she became "Darling Grannie," and he signed "Ever your poor, grateful little boy." It is perhaps all very absurd; but one certainly does not understand Ruskin without knowing this queer side of his character, part sentimental, part grotesque, which creeps out even in his most serious writing, and makes it so impossible to take his every word for gospel message. But very often he wrote to her and of her as Isola—the island—"Isola Bella" standing alone and unapproachable by all ordinary roads, and yet open on all sides to the waifs of the waves, claiming haven and rest in her sympathy. Here is the whole of a little note written in a dark time in his later years: "Is there no Isola indeed, where we can find refuge—and give it? I have never yet been so hopeless of doing anything more in this wide-wasting and wasted earth, unless—we seize and fortify with love—a new Atlantis. Ever your devoted St. C."

There are very few bits in the letters of general interest. Of somebody's sketches sent for him to look at he wrote: "Alas, there's no genius in these drawings. Genius never exists without intense industry. Industry is not genius, but is the vital element of it." In Bible reading—"I noticed, curiously for the first time, two most important mistranslations. Fancy never having noticed before that 'Sufficient unto the day is its evil,' ought to be 'Let the day's evil suffice for it.' And 'chasteneth' ought in several cases to be merely 'bringeth up, teacheth!'" Here is what he urged upon his friends in all seriousness, and most strangely if you think who the friends were: "You are compromising somehow between God and Satan, and therefore don't see your way. Satan appears to you as an angel of the most exquisite light—I can see that well

enough ; but how many real angels he has got himself mixed up with I don't know. However, for the three and fortieth time—in Ireland or England or France, or under the *Ara cœli* perhaps best of all, take an acre of ground, make it lovely, give what food comes of it to people who need it—and take no rent of it yourselves. ‘But that strikes at the very foundations of Society ?’ It does ; and therefore, do it. For the Foundations of Society are rotten with every imaginable plague, and must be struck at and swept away, and others built in Christ, instead of on the back of the Leviathan of the Northern Foam. Ever your affectionate St. C. — not the Professor.” It was to Lady Mount Temple he wrote the pretty letter telling her to arrange her party just as if Christ were coming to dinner—it is printed in “Fors Clavigera”—“I suppose Him to have just sent Gabriel to tell you He’s coming, but that you’re not to make any alterations in your company on His account.”

Perhaps she hardly needed a Ruskin to tell her that : but she kept the letter, and did what it bade. Those who know anything about the Broadlands Conferences, those remarkable meetings of men and women in all ranks and of every shade of religious belief, come together “for the deepening of spiritual life,” know what singular influence was wielded by Lady Mount Temple, and how far-reaching that influence has become.

Ruskin used sometimes to visit at Broadlands. One winter he spent several weeks there, and Lady Mount Temple says in the volume already quoted : “We found him, as always, most delightful and instructive company ; his talk full and brilliant, and his kindness increasing to all the house, giving a halo to life. He set us all to manual work ! He himself undertook to clean out the fountain in the garden, and made us all, from Juliet (Madame Deschamps, Lady Mount Temple’s adopted daughter) to Mr. Russell Gurney, pick up the fallen wood and make it up into bundles of faggots for the poor !”

His friends also came to see him at Brantwood. Mrs. Arthur Severn has a lively story of an excursion with them to the Monk Coniston Tarn, a pretty bit of water on the hills, with a fine panorama of mountains all round, the show-place of Coniston. It was a foggy morning, but he hoped it would clear ; and they drove up through the woods in expectation, but it was still foggy. They got out of the carriage and walked to the finest point of view ; still the fog would not lift. Then Ruskin waved his hand and pointed to the scene they ought to see ; and in his best eloquence, and with growing warmth described the lakelet embosomed in its woods and moors, Helvellyn and the Pikes, Bow Fell and Wetherlam, and the Coniston Old Man. For a moment it seemed as if the whole was before their eyes ; and then they burst out laughing. " After all," said Lady Mount Temple, " is not this the best treat we could have ? " " And to me," said Ruskin, with his old-fashioned courtliness, " what view could be so entirely delightful ? "





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